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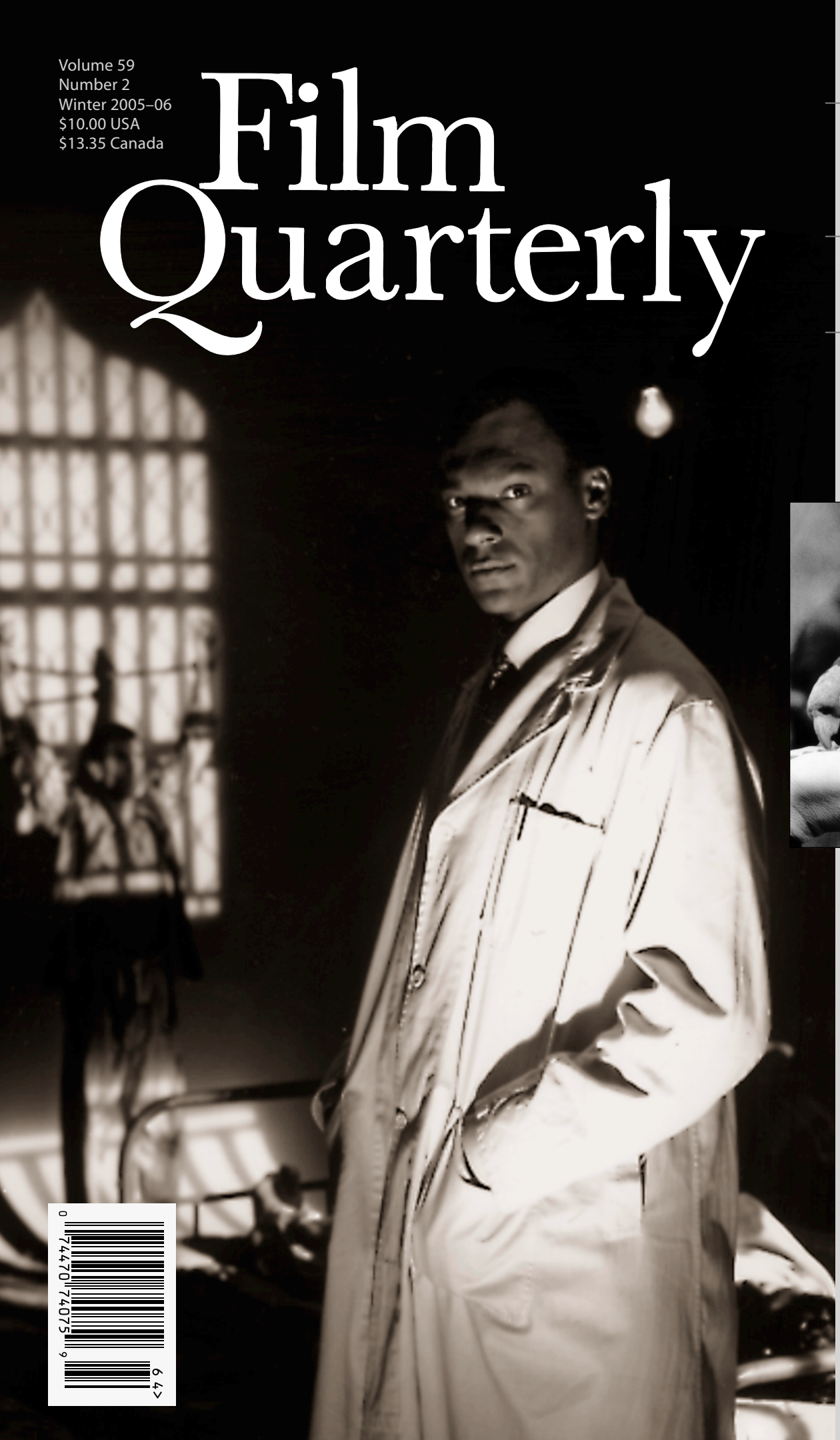

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Chihwaseon

Isaac Julien's
Ethics of Listening

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EDITOR'S NOTE

You'll notice that this issue contains an unusually large number of book reviews—almost as many as the summer and fall book survey sections. The generous contributors who write these reviews know of the unfortunate lag time between their submission to the book review editor and the editorial board, and their appearance in the journal. Many factors go into this delay, but certainly devoting a little more space in the journal to these reviews would eliminate one of them. I'll be using this strategy to catch up on the backlog—a backlog that is also a tribute and testament to our wonderful book review editor, Matthew Bernstein. Thanks to his efforts and efficacy, we are receiving more book reviews than ever, and I think it only fitting that both his hard work and that of our contributing authors be acknowledged not only with gratitude, but also with a little more timeliness.

COVER PHOTOS

Colin Salmon in *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Masksjj* (p.19); (inset) *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill* (p. 3)

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Clockwise from top left: *Nobody Knows* (p. 45); *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Masks* (p. 19); *Chihwaseon* (p. 4); *The Ninth Day* (p. 51); *Donkey Skin* (p. 40)

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The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill (p. 3)

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CLOSE UP

Bill Nichols

The Time of the Orator

ON A NATIONAL PUBLIC Radio "Talk of the Nation" show devoted to recent documentaries (from *Fahrenheit 9/11* to *Control Room*) on the Iraq War and the 2004 Presidential election, Neal Conan, the host, asked—as if it were a surprise and, quite likely, a problem—why all these films were leftist. One answer: the public debate about pressing issues has effectively screened out everything but the conservative, institutionalized voices of established media outlets. An Axis of Intolerance, drawing on fundamentalist religious beliefs and adopting a hierarchical form of institutional dogmatics that treats dissent as disloyalty, runs through numerous countries and has clearly entered into American politics. Yet however deplorable, it has still spurred many new filmmakers —and audiences—to search for alternative perspectives, and independent documentaries are where they have turned.

When Dalton Trumbo coined his memorable title, *The Time of the Toad,* in 1949, anti-Communism held the place now occupied by anti-terrorism. Repression, conformity, and naming names were the order of the day. Speaking out against injustice and exploitation, as members of the Hollywood Ten did when they made *Salt of the Earth* in 1953, demonstrated a lack of patriotism—as the mainstream media unquestioningly reported. A similar accusation of suspect loyalty hangs over the work and motives of those whose bright compelling voices challenge today's official story of war, social injustice, and human rights. But even without a generous base of patronage and grants, without historically significant collective formations such as the Film and Photo League, Newsreel, or Kartemquin Films for support, without ready access to mainstream media, and with all the challenges of making and distributing their work, documentary filmmakers have nonetheless produced an amazing array of films that defy established dogma.

This work attests to a vitality that springs from a passionate engagement with remarkable subjects, be it a French schoolteacher's graceful inspiration to a handful of rural children in *To Be and To Have* (Nicolas Philibert); the vivid and still timely recounting of the life and murder of IWW organizer Frank Little in *An Injury to One* (Travis Wilkerson); the remarkable coup and counter-coup that overthrew and then restored Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez to power in *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* (Kim Bartley and Donnacha O'Briain); the labyrinthine misperceptions and self-deceptions that circle around accusations of sexual abuse in *Capturing the Friedmans* (Andrew Jarecki), or the still unacknowledged massacre of several villages of Vietnamese civilians by South Korean troops during the Vietnam War in *Ssitkim—Talking to the Dead* (Soon-Mi Yoo). These are films that can challenge assumptions and alter perceptions. Shaped as narratives, they are, as documentaries, fictions unlike any other. They achieve internal resolution but also provoke external combustion. The filmmakers have embodied their own stance and perspective within the historical world, and challenge us to assess our own.

These films, like dozens of others that have found national and international audiences at festivals, in theaters, on cable and websites, attest to the centrality of the voice of the filmmaker. This is not simply a spoken voice, although it is striking how many recent films rely on the voice of the filmmaker, speaking directly and personally of what he or she has experienced and learned. It is a voice that issues from the entirety of each film's body as an audiovisual presence: we hear it speak to us from the selection of shots, the framing of subjects, the juxtaposition of scenes, the mixing of sounds, the use of titles and intertitles—from all those stylistic means by which a filmmaker conveys a distinct perspective on a given subject and seeks to persuade the viewer to adopt this perspective as his or her own. The spoken voices of filmmakers like Péter Forgács (*El Perro Negro*), Morgan Spurlock (*Supersize Me*), Zana Briski (*Born into Brothels*), Patrizio Guzman (*Salvador Allende*), Judy Irving (*The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill*), Jean-Marie Téno (*Afrique, Je te plumerai*), and, of course, Michael Moore (*Fahrenheit 9/11*) remind us that these filmmakers maintain their distance from the authoritative tone of corporate media in order to speak to power rather than embrace it. Their stylistic daring—the urge to stand in intimate relation to a historical moment and to those who populate it—confounds the omniscient commentary of conventional documentary. Seeking to find a voice appropriate for their subject, filmmakers—like the great orators of old—must speak from the heart in a way that both fits the occasion and issues from it. The filmmaker's passionate engagement with a subject draws forth the voice that gives embodied form to an encounter that then matters to us all.

Bill Nichols is Director of the Graduate Program in Cinema Studies at San Francisco State University. His most recent book is *Introduction to Documentary*. He is currently writing *A Social History of Film* for W.W. Norton Publishers.

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■ David E. James

Art/Film/Art Film

CHIHWASEON AND ITS CINEMATIC CONTEXTS

Posterity will probably not give a damn for pictures except the movies.
—*The Horse's Mouth,* Joyce Cary

THE CANNES FILM FESTIVAL Best Director award presented to Im Kwon-Taek in 2002 for *Chihwaseon* (*Chwihwason*) marked a watershed in both his oeuvre and the international prestige of South Korean cinema generally. It also provides a vantage point for an overview of the other streams of filmmaking that have coursed around Im's 40 years of work in cinema, those that have supplied it as well as those it has supplied.[1] Indeed, in academia, comparative studies of Korean cinema and other film industries are increasingly common and productive, marking a departure from the period when, despite its successful export industry in the 1960s, it was seen as an anomaly, a "hermit cinema," essentially sui generis and disconnected from other national cinemas. But ever since the international box-office success of *Swiri* (Kang Che-gyu, 1999) and other Korean blockbusters, this scholarship has emphasized mass-marketed genre production. The resulting devaluation of Im's work on the grounds of its success in the international film festivals rather than its appeal to East Asian popular audiences has more or less coincided with a corresponding decline in the status of the art film generally. Taking advantage of the global perspective opened up by Im's Cannes recognition, *Chihwaseon* too may be considered comparatively—that is, in some of the national and international contexts that frame it, especially those of other reflexive art films.

Three such contexts appear most pertinent: first, Im's own oeuvre, particularly the series of art films that secured his international reputation and that typically explore the artists and cultural forms of premodern Korea; second, equivalent films about artists made in other national cinemas; and third, other self-reflexive East Asian films, particularly Korean (which are often organized by narrative paradigms that Im developed but which modify or reconstruct the perspectives of his own work) and Chinese films (where a combination of similarities and differences in the respective contemporary political situations are vividly reproduced in the realm of cinema). Anticipating the consideration of these reflexive East Asian films below, we may provisionally note that many of the recent Korean and Chinese films that have distinguished themselves in the international film circuits (and which therefore may have been shaped by expectations about the tastes of foreign audiences) have been about failed artists, those who are personally and/or professionally dysfunctional. The Chinese case is illustrated by the disproportionate number of Sixth Generation films that feature demoralized bohemian subcultures, while the Korean is exemplified in the frustrated artist protagonists of Hong Sang-su's *The Day a Pig Fell into the Well* (*Daijiga umule pajinnal,* 1996), *Virgin Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors* (*O! Su-jong,* 2000), and *On the Occasion of Remembering the Turning Gate* (*Saenghwal ui palgyon,* 2002),[2] with similar themes recurring in such otherwise disparate cases as *Christmas in August* (*Parwol ui Kurisumasu,* Ho Chin-ho, 1998), *The Waikiki Brothers* (Im Sun-nye, 2001), and *Flower Island* (*Kkot som,* Song Il-gon, 2001). Rather than celebrating or expressing optimism about the social function of art and artists and so supplying models for the reconstruction of a national cinema (as did Im's earlier art films), these films all present narratives in which the artist is thwarted, as if the primary story that recent self-conscious Korean and Chinese cinemas have been inclined to tell is that of the uncertainty of present and future directions. It is ironic that such a domestic pessimism about an industry that only

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Chihwaseon: The artist transforms nature into culture.

a few years ago seemed so full of promise should coincide with *Chihwaseon*'s success; yet, as we shall see, similar uncertainties are also inscribed in it. First then, let us look at the series of films about art and artists that comprise Im's distinctive achievement, at least as it has been recognized abroad.

IM KWON-TAEK'S ART FILMS

Though their narrative concerns vary, *The Genealogy* (*Chokpo,* 1978), *Mandala* (*Mandara,* 1981), *Surrogate Mother* (*Ssibaji,* 1986), *Adada* (1988), *Fly High, Run Far: Kaebyok* (*Kaebyok,* 1991), *Sopyonje* (1993), *Festival* (*Chukche,* 1996), *Chunhyang* (*Chunhyang chon,* 2000), and *Chihwaseon* (2002) all attempt to reestablish continuity with the cultural traditions that had been lost during the massive traumas Korea experienced in the twentieth century: Japanese colonial occupation and attempts to extirpate the national identity in the first half; civil war and the division of the nation between a Soviet-maintained North and a South dominated by military dictators and a U.S. neo-colonial occupation in the second half; and throughout the century, an extraordinarily rapid modernization and industrialization. These art films have a double function in Im's attempt to create a Korean national cinema. On the one hand, they instantiate some of its possibilities; their successful evocation of premodern culture recovered lost traditions that became a source of popular domestic pride and the basis of the films' international prestige. The unprecedented and quite unexpected global position Im gave contemporary Korean cinema capitalized on the premodern nation; on the folkloric, even touristic appeal of exotic costumes and architecture; on the beauty of the landscape; and on the image of the beautiful—but always cruelly exploited—Korean woman. The tragedy of this figure became the vocabulary by which the suffering and the spirit—the *han*—of the distant past were made to suggest, if not diagnose,

the *han* of the present, and to do so in brilliantly orchestrated complex narrative structures. On the other hand, the centering of many of these narratives on artists also allowed for an allegorical self-consciousness about the overall project. Premodern Korea was represented not as a paradise of ordered and stable cultural wholeness, but as a hell of traumatic class and gender conflict. Since the films' protagonists were often engaged on quests broadly analogous to Im's own, he was able to dramatize in a popularly accessible form contemporary questions about the role of culture in progressive social movements at a time when draconian censorship and military terrorism made direct address impossible.

These films, then, contain some components of the reflexive structures of films about filmmaking itself. A system of parallels is established in which the protagonists become surrogates for the filmmaker. The nature and social implications of their art provide a model and a measure of Im's aspirations for his own art, and the degree of their accomplishment as artists can also refer to his own success at making a film about it. *Sopyonje* is the consummate case. The attempts of the *pansori* (folk opera) master, Yu-bong, to defend national musical traditions against the intrusions of foreign industrial culture are analogous to Im's attempt to create a Korean national cinema that motivates the film as a whole. In this case, the patterns are resolved successfully; though Songhwa, the *pansori* singer, suffers terrible injuries, the narrative logic implies that these are essential for the expression of *han* in her sublimely beautiful singing. Correspondingly, Im makes a sublimely beautiful though often harrowing film about her that generates a renewal of domestic appreciation for *pansori* and wins international acclaim and foreign appreciation for a uniquely Korean art form. Similar elements are present in So's ceramics or Dani's drawings in *The Genealogy,* in the relation between spiritual and social concerns in *Mandala,* in the social uses of scholarship and classical painting and of the folk story itself in *Chunhyang,* in the interpolated digital film narrated by Chun-sop to his daughter in *Festival,* and so on. All these films contain the possibility, however elliptical, of the interpolated work reflecting back onto the main diegesis, in a way similar to self-reflexive scenes about filmmaking found in both Western and other avant-garde or art films.

Semiologists designate these last as *constructions en abÿme* or "in escutcheon" or mirror constructions, "works of art that are divided and doubled, thus reflecting on themselves."[3] The classic example used in Western scholarship is Fellini's *8½,* even though the way it is dominated by this doubled structure makes it anomalous. More commonly, the mirroring component is only part of the total diegesis: the film of the *Odyssey* that is being made in Godard's *Contempt,* for example, or the films that Buster Keaton dreams in *Sherlock Jr.* Im's representations of other art forms are both simpler and more complex: simpler in that they are about mediums other than film, thereby obviating confusing overlaps between the formal properties of the main and the represented film; and more complex in that the formal properties and social implications of the represented art may not translate directly into cinematic equivalents. *Chihwaseon,* Im's film about Chang Sung-op (1843-97?), an important painter of the late Chosun period, is a film of this kind: contradictions intervene between the film itself and the diegetically represented art, making the allegory incomplete and partially negative, so that *Chihwaseon* generates not only analogies between the two artists—their personal qualities and their life's work—but also patterns of disanalogies and contradictions.[4]

Treated as a personal odyssey reminiscent of the quests of the monks in Im's Buddhist-themed films, Chang's desire to make his existence meaningful is phrased in terms of two overlapping areas: art and politics. In both spheres, his difficulties are exacerbated by his being born in the lowest of the strictly hierarchical social strata of feudal Korea, and then orphaned. The art themes revolve around the centrality of painting in the aristocratic world of late Chosun society, where it is the pivotal cultural activity. Painting is a social ritual where the practice of art mediates the external world into a model of correct human and social behavior; successful paintings transform nature into culture. To perform this function, Chang must master the classical Chinese rules of representation, and then transcend them to achieve a superior expression of both his individual sensibility and the national Korean identity. As the critics comment about the first work we see him paint, it follows all the rules, but stands outside them, and yet while being outside, still confirms them. Combining respect for tradition with creative transformation of it, Chang has the ability to become a nexus between a specifically Korean individual vision and a harmonious Korean social order.

The competition between Chinese aesthetic suzerainty and Korean independence in painting is a reenactment of and parallel to late Chosun period macro-political struggles in which Korea is a battleground between a collapsing Chinese military power and an aggressively modernizing, proto-imperialist Japan. With a weakened and rudderless monarchy, a

corrupt nobility, and an exploited peasantry, Korea is torn between a conservative faction that sees China as the best ally for its attempt to retain traditional Confucian social organization and a progressive faction that wishes to link notions of human equality to Japanese economic and military power so as to modernize and reform Korea. The privileged social role of painting and Chang's position in it inevitably draw him into this cultural struggle. He generally favors the proto-democratic possibilities of the reform party, but the conflicts between his headstrong temperament and his extraordinary abilities, and between his lowly origins and the aristocratic social milieus of his patrons, prevent him from fulfilling himself as either an artist or a political being. He is tormented equally by the demands of his aesthetic sensibility and by the apparently insoluble question of making his painting contribute to democratization, the end of domestic exploitation, and the defense of the nation against foreign invaders. Unable to harmonize the individual creative act with its social context in his art, his career is riven by contradiction, and so he finally immolates himself.

The impossibilities that consume Chang reflect a historical situation generated by the social role of painting as it was constructed in late Chosun society. Dependent on aristocratic patronage for his education, Chang is displaced from his own class and obliged to work in a medium monopolized by members of the ruling class, who attempt to exploit him for both their own aggrandizement and to make gifts that will appease foreign intruders, both Chinese and Japanese. The only way common people can benefit from his art is by vicariously identifying with his reputation and social mobility, and the only political function for the common people that Chang himself can envisage for his work is quietist. Translated into modern terms, Chang's tragedy is that he is superlatively gifted in the dominant art form of the time, but he cannot make it the vehicle of a progressive aristocratic/bourgeois public sphere, and especially not of a proletarian public sphere.

Though these impossibilities allow Im to create Chang as a dramatically complex protagonist, *Chihwaseon* subordinates the momentum of his personal drama to the political issues his life manifests. And so while the film is valuable as a reassertion of Korean cultural achievement and historical memory, it is also a transparent allegory of parallel issues in contemporary Korea. Questions about painting translate fairly directly into questions about cinema, which in Korea is still intellectually and politically engaged. During the Minjung movement (the social uprising of the 1980s and early 1990s in which large sections of the middle class joined with workers, farmers, and students in the demand for democracy), the Korean New Wave of the early 1990s was the privileged cultural practice where political issues were mobilized. It was also where a progressive Korean artist could feel that his or her work might contribute to the struggle for a freely elected government and liberation from foreign influence.

In this context, Chang is a "surrogate father" for Im himself. The equivalent for the overwhelming authority of Chinese painting is the Hollywood film industry, and the influence of Japanese connoisseurs who attempt to collect his work mirrors the Japanese financing that, in an era where mass-marketed genre films have replaced the East Asian art films of the 1980s and 1990s, has recently subsidized the less profitable art filmmakers. Japanese financial support for Taiwanese master Hou Hsiao-hsien is an obvious case in point. Im's ambition to create an authentic Korean cinema is a contemporary parallel to Chang's ambitions as a painter. More specifically, Im's life work of attempting to forge a quality cinema that is also involved in the democratic modernization of Korea is projected in Chang's desire to combine supreme aesthetic achievement and popular political significance in painting. And as well as figuring Im's attempt to create a specifically Korean art film and secure Korea's international reputation, many of the ancillary qualities of Chang's practice recur in Im's own sense of his vocation. For example, his frequent remarks in interviews that he sometimes feels possessed by a power outside him while making his films echo Chang's claim that his "brush was moved by some mysterious force."

On the other hand, differences between the two artists suggest that Chang is not an accurate allegorical self-portrait so much as an idealized or self-justifying one: Im represents the painter as he would like to see himself. Certainly the steadfastness of Chang's rejection of official favor contrasts with Im's acquiescence to politicians during the long night of the military dictators, as does his refusal to release any but the most perfect of his works or to debase himself by making pornography—temptations before which Im has sometimes faltered. In other respects, Im appears to be using Chang to justify the contradictions in his own oeuvre and his failure to address social issues directly. When Chang's mentor, a senior in the reformist party,[5] accuses him of having been blinded by his popularity and having strayed from the authentic realism of Korean genre painting by not depicting the people's suffering,[6] he replies that, despite its exaggeration, his art offers them consolation and that he has no desire to change the world.

In other cases, the identification between Im and Chang is routed through Im's long-time photographer, Chong Il-song, who shot most of his greatest films and who himself trained as a classical painter. *Chihwaseon* is persuasive as a film equivalent to Chang's work by virtue of Chong's virtuosity in creating moving-picture photography as magisterial as Chang's painting. The magnificence of Chong's landscape photography is emphasized in a series of key montages in which the film passes back and forth between shots of Chang's work —a landscape or a sky full of swirling birds—and Chong's photography of a virtually identical scene. These sequences recall the painting contests within the narrative, as if Chong were deliberately displaying the modern medium's parity with the ancient one, perhaps even the superiority of the movies over painting. Especially compelling is his use of filters to create perfectly composed monochrome landscapes, evoking the monochrome of Chang's ink painting yet enlivened by a single patch of fluorescent color: a snow-bound courtyard impossibly illuminated only by the gold of the flame with which Chang burns his rejected paintings, or the red of a woman's dress in a sea of verdant foliage.[7]

Sustaining the identification of Im with Chang, the strength of these formal parallels returns us to the possibility that Im's art might have a more directly progressive function in the lives of ordinary people than Chang was ever able to achieve—that is, the possibility that the self-alienation generated by the compromises of his dependence on the military government during the 1970s and his difficulties in directly addressing the Minjung movement might be overcome. The degree to which Chang provides a precise metaphor, if not a model, for Im's own career can be explored in the second of our contexts, the tradition of the international art films, a tradition to which *Chihwaseon* again makes a double reference.

CHIHWASEON AND WESTERN FILMS ABOUT ART

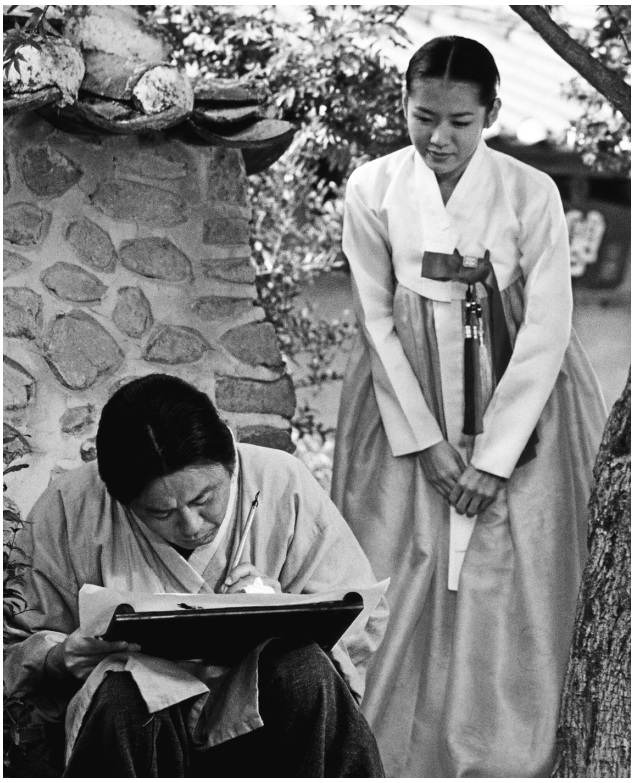
The notion of the art film—a narrative film aesthetically superior to generic industrial production—has undergone many mutations since it emerged in the mid-1920s, but the modern concept crystallized around the postwar series of European New Waves that often exploited devices parallel to those of modernist literature and painting. I have previously argued that the propriety of linking Im to this tradition lies in the combination of his formal innovations, especially the audacious, kaleidoscopic narrative structures of *Mandala* and *Sopyonje,* and his rigorous control over the formal and narrative aspects of most of his mature films, a specific mode of production resembling that of the European auteurs.[8]

More recently, the concept of the art film has been extended to include the Chinese Fifth Generation and other Asian New Waves that became successful on the film-festival circuit in the last quarter of the twentieth century by exploiting Im's key motifs: exotic locales, premodern cultures, and very attractive women. Summarized by the concept of Orientalism, these essentially touristic properties reach their apotheosis in Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and Zhang Yimou's subsequent martial arts films. Many of these Asian art films have also featured modernist devices that draw attention to the narration and cue filmic self-consciousness: the moment where the Gong Li character in *Ju Dou* (Zhang Yimou, 1990) self-consciously bares her chest and so foregrounds the way in which she is constructed as a spectacle has become a point of reference in Western criticism that has attempted to justify what appears to the Chinese authorities—and less benighted foreigners—as Zhang's degrading self-Orientalization.[9] More completely articulate forms of reflexivity are possible, even in films that make use of another medium as an allegorical intertext: the photography of the protagonist in Edward Yang's *The Terrorizers* (*Kongbu fenzi,* 1986) is a conspicuous example of such a modernist internal mirroring.[10] *Chihwaseon*'s international analogues include these, but Im's film also references another form of "art film" with which the dominant tradition sometimes overlaps: films about painters.

Given the authority of indigenous dramatic traditions, East Asian films that use another art form to raise questions about cinema have commonly privileged theater, but they also include works about painters: Mizoguchi Kenji's *Utamaro and His Five Women* (1946) and the several other Japanese films about Utamaro,[11] for example, or the more recent Chinese Sixth Generation films, including *Frozen* (*Jidu hanleng,* Xiaoshuai Wang, 1996) or *Beijing Suburb* (*Beijing Jiaoqu,* Hu Ze, 2002), that use the global art market as a metaphor for the commodification of culture and indeed all aspects of life under Chinese capitalism. But there is also a Western tradition of films about artists, including *An American in Paris* (Vincente Minnelli, 1951), *Lust for Life* (Vincente Minnelli and George Cukor, 1956), *The Mystery of Picasso* (Henri-Georges Clouzot, 1956), *The Horse's Mouth* (Ronald Neame, 1958), *Andrei Roublev* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1969), *Caravaggio* (Derek Jarman, 1986), *Dream of Light (Quince Tree of the Sun,* Victor Erice, 1990), *La belle noiseuse* (Jacques Rivette, 1991), *Basquiat* (Julian Schnabel,

1996), *Pollock* (Ed Harris, 2000), *Frida* (Julie Taymor, 2002), and most recently, *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (Peter Webber, 2003). In some such films—*An American in Paris,* for example—the fact that the protagonist is an artist is only incidental to the plot, and the qualities of his painting have no particular thematic significance or relation to the film's own formal or ideological ambitions, specifically since Hollywood's need to naturalize its own mode of production inhibits the use of questions about other arts to interrogate cinema itself. But in other cases, the qualities of the artist and his or her art may refer back to the film in which they occur.

Western capitalist films about artists almost always mobilize a cluster of post-Romantic stereotypes that have become both naturalized and de-historicized. The artist is typically represented as a natural genius, with a corollary set of secondary characteristics: spontaneity, generosity, and quick-temperedness, for example, and an ungoverned appetite for wine and women. Totally committed to his art, he—or she, for Frida Kahlo is cast in the same mold in Taymor's film—ignores the mores of bourgeois society and lives as a glamorous but tragic bohemian misfit whose gifts are fully appreciated only after death. The genealogy of this idea of the artist is well understood as a pop-culture version of the ideology of art that emerged in the bourgeois era along with two late eighteenth-century developments: first, the commodification of culture that occurred when transformations of the social order attendant on the industrial revolution deprived artists of their previous feudal patronage and forced them to sell their work on the market; and second, the failure of the American and French republican revolutions which denied artists an immediate social role and forced them into the quasi-religious exploration of individual consciousness. Van Gogh's progress in *Lust for Life* is paradigmatic of this bourgeois projection of the artist's obsessive personal interiority and lack of a social role (though initially the film demonstrates a quite anomalous concern with the working class). The artist develops from being actively involved with exploited miners to making paintings about workers and finally to expressing only his own psychic anguish and isolation in the absence of a market for his work. The only significant exception to the combination of inflated religiosity and alienated individualism traditional in films about such Romantic artists occurs in *The Horse's Mouth,* where the crowning achievement of the artist Gully Jimson is not an individually made easel-painting but a community-produced mural. Unable in his dealings with rich and aristocratic patrons to secure a wall big enough for his visions, Jimson at last finds one in a chapel that is about to be destroyed. Here, with a motley group of local girls and boys, he paints his masterpiece depicting the creation of the world.



Chihwaseon: The painter observed by beauty

Im's Chang is cast from the same mold as these artist-heroes. Though it may have echoes of Taoist transcendentalism, Chang's unconventionality is, in the context of the Western bourgeois tradition, entirely conventional, and reflects the early stirrings of Korean capitalism and other social transformations that would eventually parallel those of late eighteenth-century Europe. In fact, by the early 1920s, when the first account of Chang was published, the idea of the genius artist had been internalized in Korea.[12] But Chang resembles one modern artist especially: Jackson Pollock. Along with the drinking, womanizing, and general recalcitrance the tradition requires, Chang and Pollock —and *Chihwaseon* and *Pollock*—are linked by more specific details. Both artists are portrayed as driven by obsessions they do not fully understand. For them, painting is fundamentally an erotic activity (Chang frequently insists on the presence of beautiful young women when he works, for example, and Pollock's discovery of his drip method is figured as semen dripping from a stiff brush). Both aspire to take a foreign tradition—for Chang, the classical Chinese landscape, and for Pollock, Parisian Modernism—and remake it

specifically in native national terms; both do so by radically expanding the medium's vocabulary, including painting with fingers and sticks. A gestural, essentially calligraphic practice in which physical poise and control make the body a conduit for some more-than-human power is crucial for each artist. And they both end by killing themselves.

Painting, for both Chang and Pollock, is not primarily the production of an object but a process in which the painter finds a way to situate himself in the moment or to align himself with natural forces. The resulting painting is the product and trace of this existential positioning. Summary statements of Pollock's achievement—including Harold Rosenberg's view that in Action Painting "the act-painting is of the same metaphysical substance as the artist's existence. The new painting has broken down every distinction between art and life,"[13] and Rosalind Krauss's that Pollock "transforme[d] the whole project of art from making objects in their increasingly reified form to articulating the vectors that connect objects to subjects"[14]—echo the existential and somatic bases of Chang's practice. This is expressed in the film by the great Chosun calligrapher and scholar, Chusa (Kim Chong-hui):

> A blank paper is like the Great Void. The Great Void is held together by an invisible axis. . . . Calligraphy works on the same principle. The letters are written by the brush, the brush is moved by the fingers, the fingers by the elbow, the elbow by the arm, and the arm by the shoulder. And the elbow, arm, and shoulder are all moved by the body.[15]

Even though he manifests it to an extraordinary degree, this attunement to natural forces is intrinsic to Chang's received tradition. But for Pollock, it involves a fundamental reconstruction of the nature of art in which his unique genius prompts him to break categorically with some aspects of his received tradition. On the one hand, he abandons the easel and paints on the ground "as the orientals do" (as he says in the film), and on the other, he abandons the copying *of* nature in his art since (as he says in the film) he himself *is* nature, at least in those moments when he is totally attuned to his relation with the canvas.

The primacy of this state of complete being-in-the-present also has implications for all other art forms, and so recurs in the process of filmmaking. Since the moment of authenticity is manifest in the *act* of painting, rather than simply in the object that is produced, it is imperative that in both films the painters must be seen in the process of inspired creation. Whereas the narrative allows the actors playing Gully Jimson or Van Gogh to make only minor additions to prefabricated paintings and whereas in *La belle noiseuse* the hands and arms of a real painter (Bernard Dufour) strategically replace those of the lead actor (Michel Piccoli) when he is painting, the actors playing Chang and Pollock themselves appear to actually create works of art and so they must "act" the manual skills of the inspired artists whom they are representing. Ironically, *Pollock* unconsciously dramatizes its own inauthenticity in this respect in the film-within-the-film that it contains. Its conclusive peripeteia occurs during the dramatic reenactment of Hans Namuth's filming of Pollock at work; the inauthenticity lived by Pollock when, rather than being fully possessed by the urgency of his art, he merely *acts* its processes for the camera, is so excruciatingly self-alienating that it drives him back to drink and hence eventually to his death.

Pollock painting on the ground, "as the orientals do," in *Pollock*.

However, the parallels between the cinematic representations of Pollock and Chang are incomplete, or rather, they break down at fundamental differences in their respective historical-cultural positions and the incommensurate social implications of their art. As Chang's career comes to be defined by the tension between individual genius and social alienation and the other contradictory symptoms of the artist in the period of capital, the personal narrative duplicates the historical process. Represented by Im as lowly in origin and self-identified with what appears to be an emerging class of oppressed farmers, Chang is both drawn to and only equivocally accepted by the aristocrats who are his patrons. Yet at the same time, this system of artistic patronage is itself being replaced by the market. Pollock, on the other hand, lives in a period in which the alienations intrinsic to cultural activity under capitalism have both become naturalized and are being newly reconsolidated in an ideology of heroic self-expression.

His alienations are depicted as motivated not by political responsibilities, but by personal, indeed subconscious, traumas, and his private aesthetic struggles do not directly represent social issues, but only his relations with his wife, lover, and the handful of painters, critics, and dealers who are, however ambiguously, his friends. Though it functions as a defense against an uncomprehending and alien public, this restricted milieu is ostensibly autonomous, as indeed the value of his art itself was critically understood by Pollock's friend and critical champion, Clement Greenberg, to reside in its autonomy, its separation from social and political reality.[16]

The projection of the autonomy of Pollock's aesthetic situation represents the hyperbolic recycling of the Romantic ideology of art during the Cold War, precisely that moment in American history when McCarthyism and the domestic repercussions of the putative Communist threat had terminated the social involvement of the Popular Front artists of the previous decade. The repressed Other of Abstract Expressionism was the culture of the Soviet bloc and North Korea: Socialist Realism, the same cultural system that has, of course, been anathema in South Korea since the Korean War. In this respect, the parallels between the two films are inverse, and they mirror each other in what they cannot express. Prevented by Hollywood's own need to repress the sociopolitical context of bourgeois culture, *Pollock* instead elevates the psychoanalytic and the erotic/familial as the determining contexts of art, while *Chihwaseon,* with no theory of the psychological available to it, phrases its personal drama in terms of social alienation. Pollock dies because of the psychoses that accompany his genius, Chang because his genius can find no social reciprocation.[17]

Through the story of Chang's aspiration to make art functional within the struggle against domestic corruption and foreign invaders, Im reasserts the ideal of a genuinely popular modern Korean culture that had subtended, however "non-ideologically," all his art films. Even during his accommodations to the military dictatorship in the 1970s, he consistently returned to the working class as the privileged subject of his historical retrospection. In the 1980s and 1990s, when his vision had found a degree of social reciprocation in Minjung cultural politics, his heroes were all emblems of an incipient popular artist, one who would combine high cultural standards with a progressive political address. But in *Chihwaseon,* he made Chang's destruction by the impossibility of precisely such a conjuncture into a fable of his own failure to imagine a fruitful collaboration between the working-class and traditional culture, or to make an art that would imply or portend it. The fundamental paradox of Im's most successful film is thus that it dramatizes one of Korea's greatest painters who was *unable* to solve the problem of his own mature work: How can film and popular culture participate in progressive social movements?

The impossibilities confronting both Im and the Chang onto whom he projects his own situation are, of course, multiply overdetermined. The narrative impasse Chang faces reflects conditions and contradictions inherent in the biographical material and its historical moment: the lack of mechanical reproducibility in nineteenth-century Korea inhibited any broadly demotic social utility for painting and, as the film recognizes and as the subsequent history of Korea proved, the historical conditions for democratic social change were not present. Given the absence of a powerful or progressive bourgeoisie and the voraciousness of surrounding nations, Chang's—and by implication, Im's—conclusion that Korea should have strengthened itself internally rather than allowing the factions to introduce different foreign elements is empty. Since neither a middle-class merchant capitalism nor a bourgeois commercial culture like those of Tokugawa Japan had emerged in late Chosun Korea, the preconditions for an emulation of Japanese rapid modernization simply did not exist.

But Im's dramatization of his own uncertainty in Chang's failures also reflects objective factors in the contemporary Korean film industry, including the cultural reverberations of the International Money Fund crisis in the late 1990s and the consequent withdrawal of *chaebol* ((family-owned industrial conglomerates) funding from the film industry; the international success of *Swiri* and subsequent blockbuster films that competed with Hollywood in the East Asian market (though only by duplicating Hollywood styles rather than by creating distinctively Korean alternatives); and especially the depoliticization of the youth cultures of the late 1990s and the growth of a hedonistic cinephilia. As Kyung Hyun Kim has pointed out, the "first two years of the new millennium (2001-02)"—precisely the period of *Chihwaseon*'s production—"should be remembered for the rising popularity of crass comedy films and the waning of the New Korean Cinema."[18] The crisis is arguably also an intrinsic function of the entertainment feature film, especially one that is pitched to appeal to the global market and the Cannes judges, for while the feature industry has become increasingly oriented to entertainment genres since the achievement of democracy, radical-labor documentary film and video production has flourished in Korea more so than anywhere else in the world.

But the negativity of the allegory also reflects contradictions in Im's use of a painter as its vehicle, for though Chang and the other premodern artists Im has treated may embody exemplary qualities (Koreanness, ability to express *han,* concern for common people, beauty, association with the landscape, and so on), the limit to their viability as models for a progressive cinema lies not in the aesthetic per se, but in material and social conditions: the mode of cultural production. For since all are individual artisans, they cannot represent the condition of contemporary culture, especially the industrial cinema, with its division of labor, mechanical reproduction, extended manufacturing processes, and dependence on enormous capital investment. Im's attempts to address the precise forms of alienation intrinsic to contemporary culture will, then, remain oblique until he undertakes a film about a modern artist, especially about a filmmaker—the privileged subject of the art film. Other Korean filmmakers working with the formal structures he innovated have more directly approached questions of cultural production under advanced capital, as have several members of the most recent wave of Chinese filmmaking to achieve visibility in the West. Their films about painters and about rock musicians more acutely reflect the prospects for cinema in conditions where extremely rapid economic and political transformations have caused equally dramatic cultural crises.

RECENT KOREAN AND CHINESE FILMS ABOUT ART

Park Kwang-Su was a major force in the clandestine political ciné clubs of the early 1980s, a true underground comprising the first independent cinema in Korea.[19] The clubs were in the vanguard of cultural opposition to the U.S.-supported military dictatorships that followed the death of Park Chung-Hee, and their pioneering small format agitational documentaries were subject to severe police repression. After a period of study in France where he began but failed to complete two documentaries, Park returned to Korea and turned to fiction features. Two of his most important films—*Chilsu and Mansu* (*Chil-su wa Man-su,* 1988) and *A Single Spark* (*Arumdaun chongnyon Chon Tae-il,* 1996)—are reflexive narratives about art that allegorize the situation of Korean cinema as it was transformed by Minjung politics. Announcing the emergence of what would soon be known as the Korean New Wave, the first film was a story about two contemporary painters, Chil-su and Man-su. Where Im's Chang was forced to negotiate the social possibilities of his art in a feudal Chosun controlled by a decadent aristocracy collaborating with Chinese or Japanese imperialism, Chil-su and Man-su work in a South Korea subject to global capital and U.S. imperialism. And where Chang's received cultural context was classical Chinese painting, for these two it is U.S. industrial mass culture: they eke out a meager living painting billboards in a Seoul colonized by video games of car chases in Miami Beach, American pop music at Burger King, and *Rocky* (John G. Avildsen, 1976), the most degraded form of Hollywood cinema. Despite these differences, the relation between aesthetic and political practice is as integral in *Chilsu and Mansu* as in *Chihwaseon.*

Both the modern commercial artists come from broken families: Man-su is from the lower middle class, but his economic opportunities at home and his freedom to work abroad are curtailed by the fact that his father is a political prisoner who has been jailed for the last 30 years, and who has thus sacrificed his family to his ideological beliefs. Chil-su, from a lumpen background, with a dead mother and an alcoholic father, also wishes to leave Korea for the U.S., which he knows only through the images of cinema and video games. They are hired to paint across the side of high-rise building a huge advertisement for "Glamour Whiskey" that features a bosomy white woman complete with an English slogan, "Drinking less?" The intended effect of this ad, the consummate capitalist art form, is to increase narcotic consumption and pacify the masses, but it only exacerbates the social alienation of the cultural workers who produce it. Painting the advertisement against an urgent deadline, the two finally come to the end of their tether. Seated atop the building and looking down over the endless traffic and high-rise apartment buildings of the metropolis, they scream their anguish into the air while drinking *soju.* Ironically, they are mistaken for suicidal labor agitators, and are soon surrounded by the police, army, and press. Eventually, Man-su does in fact jump to his death, and Chil-su is arrested.

Though neither painter is able fully to articulate the social implications of his individual situation, the final scenes in which they are separated from the police by the huge breasts of the model on the whiskey advertisement are a compelling figure for the negative political possibilities of art under the military dictatorship, or, to use the vocabulary of the period, of the way the capitalist state's repressive apparatus will protect its ideological apparatus. Advertising, like other industries, brings workers together, and is able to create an affiliation between a disenfranchised intellectual and a lumpen misfit, but that affiliation cannot produce an alternative, progressive culture. The field is still held by *Rocky,* video games, and advertisements that feed indi-

Chilsu and Mansu: creating the consummate capitalist art form

vidual fantasies of empowerment while maintaining the political impotence of the masses.

Even more so than in *Chihwaseon,* the art work represented in *Chilsu and Mansu* reflects the film itself in a contradictory way: the two painters figure the apparent historical impasse Park himself faced, allowing him to dramatize the limitations that circumscribe his own practice without indicating any resolution. This indeed was the situation faced by attempts to envision an emancipatory popular cinema in Korea at the time. But eight years later, in 1996, the success of Minjung politics and the rapid progress towards a democratically elected, non-military government—and the domestic and international success of the Korean New Wave—allowed Park a much more optimistic return to questions about culture's role in bringing together artists and workers. His next reflexive film, *A Single Spark,* was based on the successful struggles of a radical writer and used the codes of Socialist Realism to allegorize the possibilities of a modern political cinema. The same year also saw the release of Wang Xiaoshuai's *Frozen* (*Jidu hanleng*), one of a new "generation" of reflexive films from China in which contemporary artists play a key role in the indictment of a complex social disorientation.

Unlike the Fifth Generation, which was a clearly demarcated, socially linked group of filmmakers that emerged as Chinese Communism began to deconstruct itself, the Sixth Generation was a diffuse, underground response to a more advanced stage of the transition to capitalism.[20] Likened in a seminal Chinese commentary to both a "scene in a fog" and a "city of mirrors,"[21] the Sixth Generation is shrouded in the post-Tiananmen combination of increased penetration of global capital and continued political repression. Intertwined with cognate movements in other arts, Sixth Generation films, especially those produced in the first stages of the movement during the mid-90s, are loosely similar in their social location and in their themes and style. Most are set in the mundane world of the generic modern city rather than in the emphatically Chinese environments of premodern myth or highly politicized modernity. They share a concern not with colorful or exemplary heroes, but with drab, unexceptional protagonists. Stylistically, they approach documentary or the simulation of documentary techniques with long takes and frequent cutaways to the environment, which adds a sense of verisimilitude but also dilutes the narrative structure. Most of them were

Beijing Suburb: the community of outsider artists

produced very cheaply, guerilla-style, on 16mm or video. They were also made outside state financing and censorship protocols, and so could not be exhibited legally in China and/or were banned there, becoming known internationally through their successes in foreign festivals. Many of these films featured alienated artists and at least two of them, in addition to *Frozen,* were based on painters: *The Day (Dongchun de rizi,* Wang Xiaoshuai, 1993) and *Beijing Suburb* (*Beijing Jiaoqu,* Hu Ze, 2002).[22] The weak narrative momentum of these films (especially *Beijing Suburb*) is exaggerated so that the diegetic looseness mirrors the dispirited aimlessness and lassitude of the characters, who, like the filmmakers themselves, work on the edges of society and legality.

Frozen, which is noticeably better photographed and has higher production values than most of the others, concerns an art student who, guided by his mentor, is shifting his attention from expressionist/realist woodcuts to performance art. Having performed earth, water, and fire burials for the first days of autumn, winter, and spring, Qi Lei proposes to kill himself in an ice burial on the first day of summer. Most of the film is a desultory alternation between his catatonic depression and the tragic-comic episodes that spiral round it—such as his brother-in-law's attempts to hoard his art work, hoping it will increase in value after his death; two classmates' performance of eating bars of soap which causes them to vomit; or another friend's entrapment in a psychiatric clinic. The ice burial goes as planned; Qi Lei dies of hypothermia; and a posthumous exhibition of his work is a brief success. Up to this point, the film appears as an allegory of life in capitalist China, with Qi Lei as an average guy except that, as an artist, he feels his alienation more sensitively than most and has a medium in which he can express it. The rejection of woodcuts (a medium whose heritage as a vehicle for popular culture during the Communist period has been replaced by its capacity to produce commodity objects that generate market relations in culture) in favor of performance art (a medium that has no such commodity status) resonates with the same anti-materialist logic that accompanied the emergence of performance art in the West in the late 1960s, and logically culminates in the artist's ultimate rejection of materiality: his death. But then the film opens up a surprising coda that exposes the suicide as a cleverly orchestrated fake, contrived by the artist and his mentor with the cooperation of his sister and a doctor. Hiding out in a beautiful countryside retreat, the artist longs to revisit his old world. Eventually, he takes a taxi through the electric Beijing night and makes fleeting contact with his sister and his girlfriend. But this glimpse of the life he has lost is so traumatic that in the end he actually kills himself by slitting his wrists.

As in *Chihwaseon,* suicide suggests the impossibility of envisioning a positive function for art and a participatory role for the artist in contemporary China, a reversal of the critical optimism that fueled the Fifth Generation and, even more categorically, of the Romantic optimism of Communist-era Socialist Realism. This disillusionment appears to be objectively justified by changes in the Chinese art world since 1989, when the social repression that began in the Tiananmen incident was paralleled by the repression of the expansive and innovative utopian avant-garde art world that had emerged in the 1980s. Chinese art historian Gao Minglu comments: "In the nineties, no artist has been able to escape from the commercial waves of the transnational economy. The art word is now dominated by a concern for commercial success. . . . Avant-garde artists, for whom critical recognition, not financial benefit, had been the only reward, now find themselves with no public outlet."[23] As a result, those artists who have not fled abroad or turned to remunerative realistic painting find themselves trapped in the same terminal pessimism that afflicts Qi Lei.

The combined impact of a repressive government and the increased penetration of transnational capital are fully and cogently realized in *Beijing Suburb,* which also focuses on a painter, Fang Jian. He and his loose community of other painters, poets, and bohemians—most of them artists playing themselves—lack residency permits and so can neither live nor work legally in the city. They exist as outsiders in that rigidly bureaucratic society and are vulnerable to both state harassment and their own feelings of impotence. At the

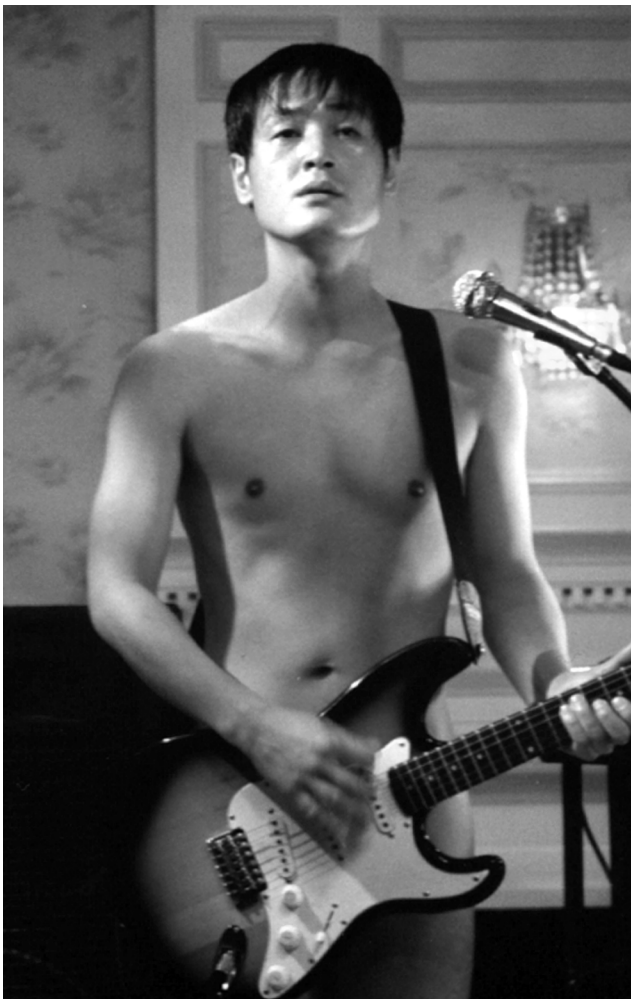
beginning of the film, one of them, a poet, is suddenly arrested and disappears; another, whose painting fails to satisfy himself, his wife, or any patron, becomes alternately morose and violent, and eventually kills himself with rat poison. All the artists are presented as genuinely attempting to find some authentic personal self-expression, but they are demoralized by the repressive state apparatus that regards such expression as subversive, by the lack of a domestic market or support system for their work, and by the interests of outside dealers and collectors who both promote and exploit them. Like Qi Lei's woodcuts in *Frozen,* Fang's paintings feature groups of tormented people, but the works are very large, with quasi-realist, concealed brushwork. And like Qi Lei, Fang sees performance as a necessary and logical step in his art. But whereas Qi Lei's involves the dramatic gesture of suicide, Fang's consists simply of paying a group of layabouts to accompany him as he sings a trite commercial jingle for bottled water, for which he is arrested and brutalized by the police.

The desultory narrative structure and the ineffectuality or tragedy of the incidents within it together knit a net of demoralized futility, but the concrete details of the local environment all seem to imply or are infused with a wider awareness of global politics. In the opening scene, Fang Jian cooks a simple meal for a dealer, Zhang Wei. While they eat, Zhang spins yarns about an investor he has lined up and his plans for an exhibition in both China and abroad, pressing Fang to finish making a copy of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* as a gift for him. All the time, a television blares reports of the NATO invasion of Yugoslavia, Soviet criticisms of it, and shots of refugees from Kosovo. The mix of deceit, opportunism, and blinding confusion in the global arena is echoed in the local situation, and precipitating both is, of course, the collapse of the utopian vision of Communism. As in *Chihwaseon,* the art world not only replicates the political order, it also functions as the mediating link between individual artists and the wider social formation. But now the mechanisms of the links are not the conventions of Confucian social hierarchies, but capital itself. Thus in a late scene in *Beijing Suburb* that echoes an important early scene in *Chihwaseon* in which Chang arrogantly dismisses a Japanese official trying to purchase one of his paintings, a foreign collector visits Fang's studio and buys a painting, and the scene cuts to the artist, dealer, and translator squabbling over his money. Chang's narrative begins with his rejection of the art business and foreign patronage; Fang's ends with his kowtowing to both.

Apart from its formal clarity, *Beijing Suburb* is especially interesting since its diegetic analysis of the state of Chinese art dramatizes both the parallel conditions in Chinese art cinema and the material properties and social existence of the film itself. It allegorizes the mode of its own production and the conditions of cultural production generally. The generally "imperfect" production values—reliance on long takes, location shooting, "real" protagonists, and the other neo-realist, quasi-documentary features—mirror the impoverishment of the artists' resources. As well as exaggerating the narrative attenuation characteristic of the Sixth Generation, the film flaunts provocative motifs that seem calculated to annoy authorities: extended scenes of male nudity, scenes of police taking bribes, and two very graphic but distanced scenes of sexual intercourse between Fang and his lover, the wife of a prosperous businessman. Like the illegal art and performances it represents, *Beijing Suburb* itself exists outside the authorized Chinese cinema; it is only clandestinely screened in underground bars and similar subcultural milieus, apart from which, again like the art work it diegetically depicts, its audience is primarily foreign.[24] Given this situation, there can be no clear decision as to whether the film is an authentic testament to cultural repression or a calculated rehearsal of such a gesture aimed at foreign audiences, who are no less titillated by accounts of problems with the present, still nominally Communist, Chinese government than they were by the possibility of reading Zhang Yimou's early 1990s historical costume dramas as allegories of the oppression of the Cultural Revolution or Maoism in general. In a globalized cultural economy, the line between Orientalism and self-orientalization remains indeterminate.

CODA: ROCK'N'ROLL

Although films about painters and other such fundamentally artisanal artists cannot fully allegorize the conditions determining collaborative industrial modern arts such as cinema, films about rock'n'roll do at least have the potential to approach such a specificity. Rock'n'roll is an important motif in Sixth Generation films. The inaugural work in the movement, Yuan Zhang's *Beijing Bastards (Beijing za zhong,* 1993), for example, was partially written by and prominently features rock star Cui Jian. And a minor—and symptomatically homeless—character in *Beijing Suburb* is a musician. The allegorical use of music in *Beijing Bastards* is, however, less than coherent. It is in a Korean film, Im Sun-nye's *The Waikiki Brothers* (2001), that the cultural situation has been most brilliantly dramatized through the use of pop music.



The Waikiki Brothers: metaphor of cultural decay

The film traces the development of a band of rock-'n'rollers from amateurs in high school through their attempt to make a living on the provincial night-club circuit. But their youthful enthusiasm is gradually eroded and their integrity, both musical and personal, is comprised by low-life entrepreneurs and sordid intrigues. One by one, members leave until only Song-u, the main musician, remains. Eventually he loses his job to a pretty but cynical and untalented young synthesizer player. Resolutely puncturing the conventions of the American rock'n'roll film, which typically portrays the glamour of the rock'n'roller's life, *The Waikiki Brothers* represents pop music as a job, ill-rewarded and soul-destroying. Though Im finally softens her pessimism in a coda where Song-u begins to revitalize his career and life by joining with a woman singer he once loved, the overall sense of cultural desolation is harrowing.[25] But by focusing on a *band* rather than on an individual artist, Im is able to figure in a single image, and directly rather than allegorically, both the social and the aesthetic components of popular culture. As it attempts to sustain itself in the midst of capitalist alienation, the rock'n'roll band manifests both aesthetic production and social organization. The inexorable erosion of the youthful musicians' dreams becomes a powerful metaphor for general cultural decay that reaches a nadir in a scene where Song-u is forced to strip and play naked for a group of drunken capitalists. A striking and summary image of cultural degradation, this brilliant, devastating scene ostensibly figures the plight of Korean popular music. But it also reflects back on Im Sun-nye herself and her art, articulating a generation's doubts about the function and the future of South Korean—and indeed, East Asian—art cinema, the very issues that Im Kwon-Taek dramatizes, albeit in a very different vocabulary, in *Chihwaseon.*

NOTES

1. The romanization of Korean names generally follows the McCune-Reischauer system, with the exception of those that have acquired other standard forms in the United States. I am very grateful to Ms. Joy Kim for guidance in this matter. I am also grateful to Professor Insoo Cho for his advice about Korean art, especially for many observations about Im's departure from the historical record in his representation of Chang Sung-op, the subject of *Chihwaseon.* I am also grateful to Nam Lee, Hanju Kwak, Berenice Reynaud, and Esther Yau for other advice and assistance. Earlier versions of parts of this essay appeared in "Yesul, Yonghwa, Yesul Yonghwa: *Chwihwason* Kwa Ku Tongnyu Yonghwadul," in *Chwihwason,* ed. Paek Mun-im (Seoul: Yonsei University Media Art Institute, 2004).
2. On the work of Hong Sang-su, see especially Kyung Hyun Kim, "Too Early/Too Late: Temporality and Repetition in Hong Sang-su's Films," in *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004) and Akira Mizuta Lippit, "Hong Sangsoo's Lines of Inquiry, Communication, Defense, and Escape," *Film Quarterly,* vol. 57, no. 4 (Summer 2004): 22-30.
3. Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 228. On reflexivity in general, see especially Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).
4. No written biography of Chang appeared until Chang Chi-yon's *Ilsa yusa* (1922). The film depicts only the skeletal details of what is known of his life: his being an orphan whose genius was discovered by a local aristocrat; his promiscuity and drunkenness; his rejection of the king's commission; and his eventual disappearance. Im has said that one of the reasons why he chose Chang as the subject for his film is that, since biographical information about him is sparse, he could simultaneously ground his story in a real figure and rewrite his biography according to his own needs. See Im's comments on Chang in Chong Sung-il, ed., *Im Kwon-Taek by Im Kwon-Taek* (*Im Kwon-Taek i Im Kwon-Taek ul Malhada*) (Seoul, Korea: Hyonmun Seoga, 2003), Vol. 2, 449-524. The biographical parallels between himself and his subject that Im cites include similarities in their unhappy childhoods and their love of

drinking. He also emphasizes the fact that Chang was a working professional who made his living by selling his art. He states summarily, "*Chihwaseon* is the film into which I projected myself the most" (453). Insoo Cho estimates that the narrative is 80-percent fictitious.

5. A fabricated figure, named in the film as Kim Pyong-mun.
6. The so-called "true-view landscape" (*chingyong sansu*).
7. Insoo Cho has pointed out that many paintings here attributed to Chang are in fact by other, often more modern, artists.
8. See my "Im Kwon-Taek: Korean National Cinema and Buddhism," in David E. James and Kyung Hyun Kim, eds., *Im Kwon-Taek: The Making of a Korean National Cinema* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2002).
9. See Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 166-68.
10. See Fredric Jameson, "Remapping Taipei," in *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992).
11. For example, *Utamaro's World* (Akio Jissoji, 1977) and *Sharaku* (Masahiro Shinoda, 1995).
12. After the Independence Movement in 1919, the occupying Japanese allowed limited freedom of publication in their Korean colony. The new magazines of the period introduced the motifs of Western Romanticism, including the idea of the artist as bohemian.
13. Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," in *The Tradition of the New* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 23.
14. Rosalind Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 26.
15. *The Principles of Calligraphy,* cited in Suh Ji-Moon, *The Golden Phoenix: Seven Contemporary Korean Short Stories* (Boulder, CO: Reinner, 1998), 24.
16. For example, "once the avant-garde had succeeded in 'detaching' itself from society, it proceeded to turn around and repudiate revolutionary politics as well as bourgeois." Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," in *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate,* ed. Francis Frascina (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 22. Pollock's "action painting" coincided with his and other painters' conclusive turn from concerns with the Popular Front politics of the late 1930s to their own individuality and their own unconsciousness. Compare: "But by 1943 political disappointments (e.g., the collapse of the social base for a revolution) and changed social conditions (e.g., the growth of the private art market and of a knowledgeable audience for the arts) had caused some artists to assert their own individuality with strength and confidence." Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 75.
17. Significantly, the conditions framing artistic production mirror those of biological reproduction: Pollock's wife, Lee Krasner, refuses to give him children because she fears the demands of his unstable ego; but Chang, at the very moment when he desperately attempts to impregnate a lover who wants to be the mother of his children, is thwarted by the agents of the state, who intervene and force him to ejaculate uselessly outside her body.
18. Kim, ix. For an overview of the traumas faced by the Korean cinema in the late 1990s, see Lee Yeon-ho, "Mapping the Korean Film Industry," trans. Im Hyun-ock, *Cinemaya* 37 (1997).
19. Park was one of the founders of both the Yallasong Film Studies Group and the Seoul Film Group, the two most important film collectives that, as well as making samizdat films, translated several Third World cinema manifestoes.
20. On Sixth Generation filmmakers, see especially Chen Xiaoming, "The Mysterious Other: Postpolitics in Chinese Film," *boundary 2,* vol. 24, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 123-41; Dai Jinhua, "A Scene in the Fog: Reading the Sixth Generation Films" in *Cinema and Desire: Feminist Marxism and Cultural Politics in the Work of Dai Jinhua,* ed. Jing Wang and Tani E. Barlow (London: Verso, 2002), 71-98; Jenny Kwok Wah Lau, "Globalization and Youthful Subculture: The Chinese Sixth-Generation Films at the Dawn of the New Century," in *Multiple Modernities: Cinemas and Popular Media in Transcultural East Asia,* ed. Jenny Kwok Wah Lau (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2003); Berenice Reynaud, "Zhang Yuan's Imaginary Cities and the Theatricalization of the Chinese 'Bastards,'" (2004), in *The Urban Generation: Chinese Cinema and Society at the Turn of the 21st Century,* ed. Zhen Zhang (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, forthcoming).
21. The epithets are Dai Jinhua's; see Dai, 72. Dai characterizes the cultural environment as comprising "the ambiguous ideology of the post-Cold War era; the implosion and diffusion of mainstream ideology; global capitalism's tidal force and the resistance of nationalisms and nativisms; the penetration and impact of global capital on local cultural industries; cultures' increasing commercialization in global and local culture markets; and the active role local intellectuals, besieged by postmodern and postcolonial discourse, have undertaken in their writing" (72).
22. Yang Fudong's semi-documentary films utilizing his artist friends, which have been so well received in Western art circles, are closely related.
23. Gao Minglu, "Towards a Transnational Modernity: An Overview of *Inside Out: New Chinese Art,*" in *Inside Out: New Chinese Art,* ed. Gao Minglu (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 21-22.
24. Thus, the very high-profile academic Dai Jinhua has noted that virtually all her information about the Sixth Generation "was communicated to [her] only by overseas publications and friends." Dai, 91.
25. This redemptive coda is emphasized by Chong Chae-hyong, who also otherwise reads the film as a social allegory; see Chong Chae-hyong, "One Bright Ray of Fantasy in a Cold Waterfall: Notable Films Shown at the 4th Pusan International Film Festival," *Yonghwa pipyong* (*Film Critiques*) 2 (30 June 2002): n.p.

DAVID E. JAMES teaches in the School of Cinema-Television at the University of Southern California. His most recent book is *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles* (University of California Press, 2005).

ABSTRACT The international success of Im Kwon-Taek's *Chihwaseon* prompts consideration of its relation to other films that use narratives about art and artists as allegories for filmmaking: the reflexive art films that established Im's reputation; feature films about artists made in the West, especially *Pollock*; and other recent reflexive films from Korea and China.

Editor's Note

I must confess that when I started as editor of *Film Quarterly*, in 1991, I was somewhat daunted by the thought of following in the footsteps of the previous editor, Ernest Callenbach. He founded the journal in 1958, and edited, published, and sustained it for more than 30 years: an incredible feat of imagination, skill, and endurance. But as it turned out, being *FQ* editor has been an exceptional and glorious time; I have learned and enjoyed more than I ever imagined possible. Now that it's my turn to retire (after a mere 14 years), in the spring of 2006, I hope that my successor will take on the challenges and responsibilities of this position and be able to draw from them the same rewards that I have (I recommend skipping over the being daunted part). Yes, the rose garden had a few thorns: I have sweated over revolving deadlines, agonized over competing manuscripts, and fretted over a hundred little things for every issue. But luckily, I didn't have to do any of this alone. I have worked with colleagues who helped me immensely in, without exaggeration, countless ways. I am deeply grateful for this good fortune, and gladly take this opportunity to mention some of the many people who extended—so very generously—their time, their support, their advice, their collaboration, and their friendship.

I would like first and foremost—for they have always been my first recourse—to thank the *FQ* editorial board members for their immense and invaluable gifts of time and energy, for their unfailing support, and for the great pleasure and reassurance of their company (they are, incidentally, among the most delightful lunch companions I have ever had!). Their scholarly expertise and intellectual rigor guide this journal wisely and well. I thank the former book review editors David Desser and Stephen Prince for their efforts and accomplishments in a complex and challenging position, and the dedicated Matthew Bernstein, who today manages the taxing and time-consuming details of *FQ*'s book reviewing with great grace and good judgment. And I thank the local editors, my editorial colleagues, the *FQ* advisory board, and the Press production team for assisting me so dependably and enthusiastically over the years.

Then I need to add just two more heartfelt thank-you's: The first, to the journal's contributors, with whom I have worked with so much pleasure, and whose writing has kept the journal engaged with all manner of thought-provoking issues and compelling ideas. And finally, dear readers, I thank you, for without your unfailing enthusiasm and loyal interest, there would be no *Film Quarterly*.

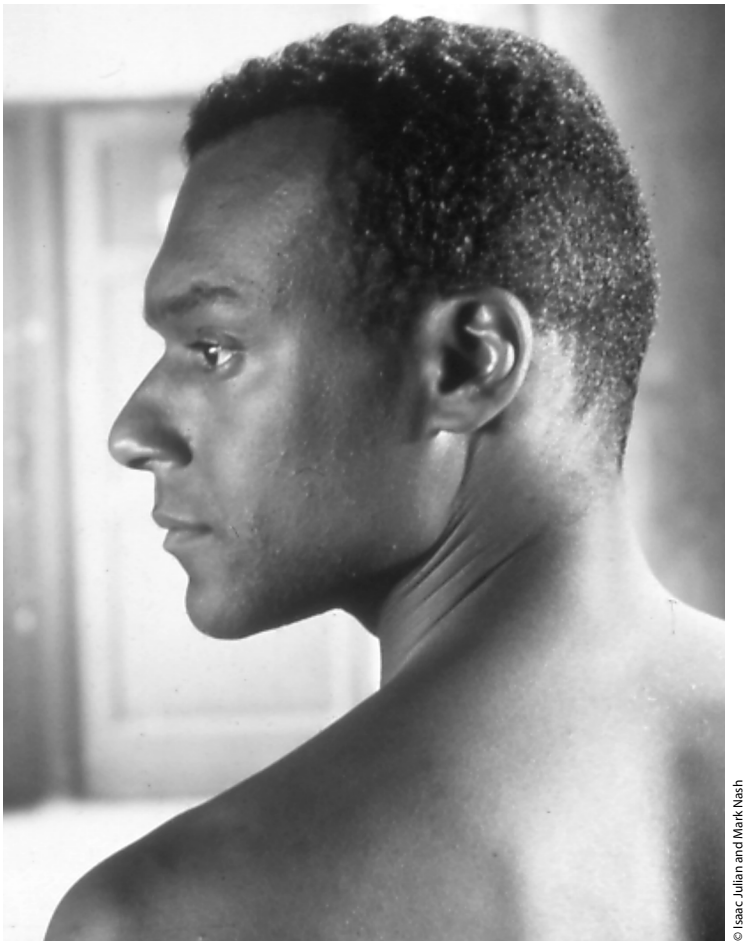
In all of this gratitude, there is one more thing I am grateful for: This is not really goodbye. I will continue to be affiliated with the journal after next spring. I see this as another way in which I can follow in the footsteps of Ernest Callenbach . . . and since I have learned so much, this time I am not daunted at all.

Ann Martin, Editor

■ **Jonathan Kahana**

Cinema and The Ethics of Listening

Isaac Julien's *Frantz Fanon*



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Colin Salmon as Fanon in *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Masks*

SINCE THE LATE 1980s, British film and video artist Isaac Julien has produced a body of moving-image work that stands as one of the most important reflections, in contemporary visual culture, on the social condition of the border. Passing easily among the worlds of theatrical film, activist media, commercial television, and multi-channel installation video, Julien has explored the idea of liminality in remarkably wide-ranging ways. From his documentary work with the London-based Sankofa collective on the Afro-British experience in the late 1980s and his lyrical study of Langston Hughes, *Looking for Langston* (1989), to his explorations of black British and African-American popular culture (*Young Soul Rebels* [1991]; *The Darker Side of Black* [1994]; *BaadAsssss Cinema* [2002]; *Baltimore* [2003]) and his recent series of video installations on geography, violence, and desire (*The Long Road to Mazatlán* [1999]; *Vagabondia* [2000]; *Paradise Omeros* [2002]; *True North* [2004]), Julien has consistently argued the mobility of identity, whether measured in terms of race, class, sexuality, or nationality.

His own mobility as an artist has been crucial to the form of this argument. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of Julien's work is its insistence—a legacy of his grounding in British cultural studies—on the material connection between identity and cultural practice. Though by no means the only contemporary filmmaker at home in both single-screen cinema and multimedia gallery art, Julien's commitment to the political and theoretical project of cultural studies makes his work especially attentive to the matter of borders, and to ways in which bodies can be located and dislocated in space and time. The formal, technological, and institutional conditions of the image—and through it, cultural identities—are always foregrounded in Julien's filmmaking, making it difficult to say with precision whether he is primarily a theorist or a practitioner of the moving image. Because it occupies a space between mass art and social analysis, documentary practice has provided Julien with opportunities to think through the question of how cultural criticism might be both explored and advanced outside its traditional home in the academy and other elite institutions. By placing figures like Hughes and Frantz Fanon at the center of his documentary work, Julien simultaneously proposes new foundations for the interstitial identity of documentary. These figures model a very different conception of geographic or intellectual migration than those of Robert Flaherty or John Grierson. They model, as well, a different kind of truth-claim about the imagined community of the nation.

The problem of where to position the intellectual work of documentary, as social practice or its afterthought, is felt most acutely in Julien's 1996 film about the life of Frantz Fanon. Fanon's work was suspended between the theory and practice of anti-colonialism, making it a reflecting surface for Julien's own career. This duality repeats itself in the very life of the film, which circulates in two versions, a 73-minute 35mm film for theatrical exhibition and a 52-minute version that Julien cut for British television. (The latter is distributed on video in North America by California

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Newsreel, primarily for use in education.) Julien has said that he and producer Mark Nash consider the former the "authored" version of the film, and there are significant differences between the two versions. In an interview left out of the short version, Antillean writer Maryse Condé observes that "love sometimes puts you in a position of contradiction with your ideological or philosophical opinions." While both versions of the film take up the question of the role that contradiction played in Fanon's life and thought, and of the tension between desire and reason, the long version is considerably more nuanced, in both poetic and philosophical terms, on the consequences of these contradictions for Fanon and the subject of post-coloniality hailed by his work. (Condé is, for instance, one of a number of women given the opportunity, in the long version of the film, to speak to the matter of gender in the theory and practice of revolution, a point of much contestation among contemporary readers of Fanon.) Through the words and writing of a wider variety of commentators, including Condé, Simone de Beauvoir, Homi Bhabha, and a group of women veterans of the Algerian revolution, a more complex and conflicted Fanon emerges in the longer film.

Nevertheless, I will be referring here to the shorter version of the film, for two reasons. Not only are readers more likely to see or have seen this version, but they are also more likely to recognize the Fanon presented in this version, which resembles more strongly the use made of him in recent years by Anglo-American film and cultural theorists. The film was made during a revival of interest in Fanon's work among scholars, artists, and other cultural intellectuals—a flurry marked by academic panels and conferences, art exhibitions, and scholarly publications in the 1990s.[1] Central to this activity was Fanon's study of the psychology of racism, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), and the psychoanalytic model of colonial subject-formation presented therein. The Lacanian Fanon fit comfortably with the theories of identity that had begun to dominate film studies, cultural studies, and gender and sexuality studies in the 90s, making Fanon appear one of the ancestors of a certain cultural politics of visuality, the one contained under the heading of "the gaze" (or, sometimes, "the male gaze"). My aim here is to draw this genealogy out of *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Masks* (1996)—which, like Julien's other work, sometimes overstates the significance of this critical formation—and to show how this visual thinking is counterbalanced by an aural tendency in Julien's film, in Fanon's work, and in documentary itself.

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The aural tendency: sound recording on the set of *Frantz Fanon*

Subtending the thematics of the gaze, Julien's attention to the dynamics of sound production and reception allows *Frantz Fanon* to propose (perhaps unconsciously) that a different sense of subjectivity—that found in the act of listening—may be deployed against the power relations that inhere in the culture of the gaze. Julien's sensitive ear for the echoes and overtones of one culture, or time, in another informs the film's remarkable use of sound as textual figure and element of form. An aural conception of its subject and its viewer helps the film document the fine balance Fanon maintained, as Bhabha puts it, "between the politician and the psychiatrist."[2] Inspired by Fanon's traveling humanism, the film enables us to see how the use of sound can make documentary a tool of ethics, receptive to the tentative situation of the other. Insofar as both listening and documentary are themselves positioned uncertainly in film studies, the film also opens onto larger questions of how the borders of a discipline are defined.

THE RETURN OF THE REAL

In the 1970s, film theory began to regard the issue of realism that fascinated postwar critics like André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer as something of an embarrassment, if not a scandal.[3] In the early 1950s, Bazin had identified two kinds of filmmakers: those who "put their faith in the image, and those who put their faith in reality."[4] The Lacanian and Althusserian positions which have dominated film theory since the 1970s turned film away from reality and towards the image. If theorists who occupied these positions could not exactly be said to believe in the image, they certainly behaved as if spectators did: whether inflected by psychoanalysis or Marxism, their criticism directed

itself at the social conditions and consequences of regimes of spectacle, voyeurism, and fetishism that had promulgated certain misrepresentations of the world. It was as if Bazin's distinction between two kinds of directors, the realists and the imagists, had been collapsed into a suspicion of the image which presupposed the existence of a reality external to representation.

This critique of the image was encapsulated in the concept of "the gaze," which was taken to mean "an idealized point from which the film can be looked at."[5] This was a rather clumsy translation from the language of psychoanalytic theory, where the gaze stood for precisely the opposite effect: not the position from which an all-seeing subject would master the world, but rather the object through which a subject's desire comes into focus. The translation of the psychoanalytic subject into the language of cinema had the effect, in other words, of making the correspondence between the technology of cinema and what Christian Metz called the "mental machinery" of cinema appear more complete than it is in practice.[6] The problem with this theory of the cinematic apparatus is that, as Mary Ann Doane has written, "the apparatus always works. It never breaks down, is never subject to failure."[7]

A number of recent works of documentary cinema engineer this failure and place it on display. In their attention to what Metz called the "aural object," a sound that resists identification, these works challenge the theory that the technology of cinema models the spectator's activity. And because of their emphasis on the ethics and aesthetics of listening, they reflexively raise the question of what it means to be an audience. These works pose again Bazin's question: What kind of irrational desire makes the cinema real? By "real," of course, Bazin meant a collapse of the distinction between theory and practice: the photographic image doesn't just share "the being of the model of which it is the reproduction," he argued, "it *is* the model."[8]

The past two decades have seen the development of a conceptual practice of documentary, one influenced by critical debates about vision, subjectivity, and reality. The versions of nonfiction cinema practiced by filmmakers such as Chantal Akerman, Werner Herzog, Errol Morris, and Trinh T. Minh-ha, to name only a few innovators, challenge the ontology of the documentary form while maintaining the importance of Bazin's question. Particularly in their approach to the matter of testimonial speech, these filmmakers fuse the Bazinian interest in reality and the contemporary theoretical preoccupation with intersubjectivity.

It is perhaps no accident that the interview is so frequently the central explanatory device of films that challenge the premises of documentary, since the practice of the interview appears in founding statements of both psychoanalysis and cinema theory. In "The Myth of Total Cinema," where he famously concludes that cinema has not yet been invented, André Bazin refers to the "dream" reported by the nineteenth-century French photographer Nadar in 1887, several years before the first publicly exhibited moving pictures: "My dream is to see the photograph register the bodily movements and the facial expressions of a speaker while the phonograph is recording his speech."[9] Nadar did in fact publish a prototype of the filmed interview in the *Journal illustré* in 1886—a series of photographs of the chemist Chevreul on the occasion of his hundredth birthday, captioned by statements Chevreul was apparently making at the moment each image was taken. Nadar had intended to accompany the photographs with recordings made with an invention called a photophone, but because of technical difficulties with the apparatus he was forced to resort to approximate transcriptions of Chevreul's speech. Since his failed invention only forestalls the future realization of cinema in its pure state, it functions, for Bazin, as a more authentic site of origin than the ephemeral and profit-driven industrial experiments of Edison and the Lumières. Nadar's interview serves, in Bazin's account, as the moment at which cinema was *conceptually,* rather than *technically,* possible.

If the return to this pure origin eludes the cinema, then each subsequent practice of the filmed interview also replays, on a transferential stage, this frustrated return. The filmed image connects viewers to history only by an act of magic (or, as Bazin would prefer, faith), which permits them to take the present tense of moving pictures for the past instant of recording. In the scene of recording with which we are presented in the interview, the equipment of sound filmmaking is seemingly made to disappear, and cinema effects the return to a primitive depiction of movement, the movement back in time through a voice inspired by memory.

This fantasy is played out in Werner Herzog's 1997 film *Little Dieter Needs to Fly,* a film that is essentially one long interview with the full-grown "Dieter" of the title, Dieter Dengler. Dieter became obsessed with a childhood dream of flight during World War II, when his German town was bombed by American planes. In order to pursue his dream, Dieter emigrated to the U.S., eventually joining the Navy and flying fighter jets during the Vietnam War. Shot down on a mission, Dieter spent several months as a prisoner-of-war in Laos and

North Vietnam, enduring unspeakable cruelties before making a miraculous escape. The film recreates these experiences with archival footage and present-day interviews with Dieter, who has a remarkable capacity to narrate: he speaks almost continuously throughout the film, recalling his experiences in vivid detail, and almost without any trace of emotion.

To underscore the force of Dieter's original dream of flight in the subsequent events that make up his biography, the interviews with Dieter are more mobile than is customary. The interview-based documentary tends to frame its subjects in a single evocative or emblematic location: in front of the factory where they once worked; next to a ravine where a terrible event occurred; in the office where they conduct their research. This technique accentuates the magical power of the testimonial voice, its capacity to (re)cover great distances in space and time and to spirit the viewer to another place and time than the one seen in the present image. The frame of the image is often static during these interviews: the mobility of the apparatus is muted, so that the agency of the voice can be brought into relief. Herzog, however, places Dieter in the authentic settings of his story, editing him back and forth between locations identified with the more distant or more recent past. If this visual displacement is meant to illustrate the power of the voice to evoke images of the past, these literal demonstrations—as when Dieter is made to narrate, while bound and running through the jungle, the story of his forced march from Laos to North Vietnam—have the opposite effect: they undermine the voice's agency and aura, placing the documentary power of the image in conflict with that of the voice. The Freudian character of this reversal consists in its destabilization of the origin: Dieter and Herzog return to the original locations of Dieter's dreams and nightmares and find, of course, that the perpetrators of his torture are no longer there, and that the sites themselves are transformed.

Moments of mere formal or characterological excess in the more conventional documentaries, these reversals and subversions of the voice are central to the work of filmmakers like Herzog and Julien, who are concerned with the reality-effects of states like memory, delirium, and fantasy, to which no truthful utterance, nor singular speaking subject, corresponds. Such is the case, for example, with the opening of Julien's *Looking for Langston.* After a series of titles that name a collective subject of the film—which is announced as a "meditation on" Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance, using the poetry of Essex Hemphill and Bruce Nugent, and dedicated to James Baldwin—without getting around to naming the film or its author, a voice reads what the accompanying images (of Harlem in the 1920s and of a body in a casket) suggest is a funeral oration for Hughes. But Hughes died in the late 60s, the voice is Toni Morrison's reading a remembrance of Baldwin, and the body turns out to be that of Julien himself. Rather than guaranteeing the true meaning of images, as it might in another kind of documentary, the use of voiceover here suggests how powerfully unstable voice can be, especially when the imaginary is fully admitted as a topic and a technique of documentary.

FANON'S OTOBIOGRAPHY

In staging a cinematic version of the dialogue in the analyst's office and pursuing the same therapeutic effects, Herzog's film demonstrates the incomplete or frustrated character of the transference between cinema and psychoanalysis. In his psycho-biography of Frantz Fanon, Isaac Julien engages in a similar inflection of oral history by the methods and themes of psychoanalysis. Julien takes his lead from Fanon's own writings on the ethics of listening. In *Black Skin, White Masks,* Fanon captures precisely the difference between the gaze and ordinary human vision when he writes that

> The *eye* is not merely a mirror but a correcting mirror. The *eye* should make it possible for us to correct cultural errors. I do not say the *eyes,* I say the *eye,* and there is no mystery about what the eye refers to; not to the crevice in the skull but to that very uniform light that wells out the reds of Van Gogh, that glides through a concerto of Tschaikowsky, that fastens itself desperately to Schiller's *Ode to Joy,* that allows itself to be conveyed by the worm-ridden bawling of Césaire.[10]

Fanon describes a fantastic confusion of the senses: great works of art force on us a synesthesia wherein music or literature may speak to us in light. But how does the vertigo precipitated by this derangement of the senses amount to a correcting experience?

Fanon's reflections on Western art appear in the chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks* called "The Negro and Psychopathology," where he argues that racism is directly related to the language of vision. Like the Jew, says Fanon, the Negro is a symbol of Evil, "[t]he black man more so, for the good reason that he is black. Is not whiteness in symbols always ascribed in French to Justice, Truth, Virginity?"[11] If Fanon's humanism obligates him, at this stage in his political development, to value citizenship over nation or ethnicity ("What is all

this talk of a black people, of a Negro nationality? I am a Frenchman. I am interested in French culture, French civilization, the French people"[12]), undoing the peculiar cultural logic of perception that ties skin color to "French" is nonetheless one of his central goals. In his later writings on the Algerian revolution, Fanon stresses the place of listening in both colonial and anti-colonial strategy, from the use of radio for propaganda and counterpropaganda to police practices of interrogation and the variations on psycho-therapeutic dialogue applied by both the French and the Algerian liberation movement, which eventually included, of course, Fanon himself. These writings on listening practices can be read as a continuation of the theme Fanon introduces in the above passage: the separation of signification from the evidence of the senses, for the purposes of "correcting cultural errors."

In his writing on "aural objects," Christian Metz suggests that aurality provides an opportunity to reverse the "primitive substantialism" of visual culture, the primacy accorded to classes of objects which confirm the independence and integrity of the subject sensing them.[13] In the language of cinema, Metz shows, the image is encoded with "tactility": we experience images as either "there" or not. Within the boundaries of the frame and screen, images are fully present and fully separate from the spectator. Metz argues that a description of cinema that restricts itself to the objects of screen and image is fated to explain the experience of cinema in terms drawn from the Enlightenment conception of the subject, and to perpetuate the "world view" that maintains this subject's privilege.[14] By making use of what Metz calls the "infra-objects" of sound in cinema, Julien and the other filmmakers I have mentioned challenge this "primitive substantialism" and, in doing so, the premise that distinguishes documentary from fiction filmmaking and that has exempted documentary from theoretical analysis: the idea that recording is essentially *physical,* not social.

THE GAZE IN LISTENING

The analysis of a gaze in listening is one of the central themes of Julien's 1996 film. Like some of Julien's previous film and video works, including the 1991 feature *Young Soul Rebels* and the semi-documentary "meditation" on Langston Hughes, *Looking for Langston, Frantz Fanon* uses a complicated sound design to underscore a politics of group identity. As in those previous works, listening—as both diegetic content and dimension of the spectator's experience—is central to the film's efforts to challenge the separation of media, and of cultures, into original and authentic domains. *Frantz Fanon* recounts Fanon's biography with various forms of documentary exposition, including archival footage, interviews, and dramatic reenactments of Fanon's life and writings and of the social and political consequences of his work on behalf of the Algerian nationalist cause. Fanon himself appears in both documentary and fictionalized scenes; the latter include a series of choreographed, mute tableaux of Fanon's family life. These re-creations illustrate one of the film's central questions: How is the vexed status of the Oedipus complex in Fanon's notion of the alienated black male, and thus of colonial society itself, related in a decisive way to Fanon's biography? In an early tableau that will be revisited again and again, young Fanon is listening to Caribbean dance music on the radio when his mother enters and turns the music off. This scene reverberates through the rest of the film. Before describing its organization in detail, I will explain how the film arrives at its basic set of topics.

The film's narration is suspended between two authoritative kinds of interview that are distributed throughout its length: on the one hand, interviews with Fanon's interpreters, scholars like Stuart Hall and Françoise Vergès; and on the other, interviews with figures who stand for the historical origins of Fanon's work, including co-workers and relatives such as Frantz's brother, Joby Fanon, and his son, Olivier. Although the two types of interview are distinguished

Joby Fanon | Françoise Vergès | Stuart Hall | Olivier Fanon

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from each other in overtly formal ways, both respect the cardinal rule of the documentary interview, which is that the subject does not address the camera directly, but appears to be engaged in conversation with an interlocutor slightly off-axis from the camera. (This adherence to documentary tradition is one of the film's many ambivalences, since Julien breaks the taboo against actors looking into the camera—which applies in documentary as strictly as in narrative cinema—almost every time the actors playing Fanon appear on screen.)

What comes to look like the film's "primal scene," the conflict over the radio, is prefaced by a portion of the interview with Stuart Hall in which he outlines the Hegelian contract of identity on which Fanon's theory of the look relies (and which, at the same time, it revises[15]), the so-called Master/Slave dialectic. As Hall's explanation is presented on the soundtrack, the screen displays newsreel footage of a colonial ceremony of recognition. Hall's description of colonial relations interprets this newsreel footage theoretically, making it clear that by "look," the film is not referring to purely perceptual relations. In the newsreel image, a formally dressed official is shaking the hands of a line of colonial subjects, recognizing them for their service to the empire. In this image, there are at least four possible looks: that of the colonial administrator and his ceremony of recognition; the look of the colonized, back at the official; the look of the newsreel camera recording the event; and that of the camera re-photographing the newsreel for inclusion in the film we are now watching. The look with which the film is ultimately concerned, then, is not that face-to-face relation which takes place within the physical relations of colonialism, but that sense of overlooking which the entire ceremony represents. The newsreel apparatus can be seen as complicit with the gaze of colonialism insofar as it conveys the deeds of a benevolent administration back to the nation. There is a kind of slippage, it is suggested, between acts of face-to-face looking, acts of official recognition, and the cinematic apparatus. One of the goals of Julien's film is to deconstruct this sense of visuality, even as he claims to be using the medium to "visualize theory," a contradiction that leads to the film's most interesting problems.[16]

As this rhythm of document and analysis unfolds, the film continues to explore the construction of perceptual space. When we return to the shot of Hall's interview, he explains that the colonial situation is an extreme version of the Master/Slave dialectic that stretches it to its limit: ". . . it is the master saying, 'I do not see you at all.'" This statement is accompanied by a cut to a black-and-white ethnographic photograph of an unidentified group of natives facing the camera. Julien's camera pans over this photograph and then passes into the setting of Fanon's memory, a tableau vivant of the traumatic family scene at the radio. Aided by a musical cue (a Caribbean dance tune which rises in volume as we leave the field of the photograph and enter the mise-en-scène of the familial space), the camera here articulates an aural logic of space, an architecture of listening derived from the associations that occur, among other places, in the analytic dialogue. Passing from one space and time to another, the film here subordinates the logic of the image—which governs the structure in place since Griffith, of spaces abutted on the order of discrete shots—to the logic of sound, which, as we will see, is a logic not of parallelism or metaphor but of contamination and overdetermination. In the sequence of seven shots that follow, the sounds of the radio at which young Fanon sits move us back and forth between two different physical spaces: the interior of the home and a dance taking place in an "outside" represented by newsreel footage. When Fanon's mother reaches down to shut off the radio, the camera moves in, framing young Frantz against a black background, staring defiantly into the camera.

As this final image is composed, two sounds come up in the mix: the beginning of the next interview, and the musical signature of this event—a few brooding notes from a chamber orchestra, and a brief aria sung in a woman's voice. Each time a crisis of identity strikes Fanon in the film, this voice will be heard, linking the crisis to its source in this scene. In the following sequence, Françoise Vergès explains the significance of the previous scene: Fanon's mother was a very light-skinned Alsatian, and his father was very dark. One day, Frantz was listening to his mother singing a French song. When he interrupted and asked for a Creole song, his mother told him to "stop being like a nigger." Finally, the camera movement that linked the discourse on the look and the following discourse on sound at the beginning of this sequence—a movement that appeared to function in a purely grammatical, copulative manner—is grounded in a biographical source: it becomes the signifier of Fanon's mother's racism, which the film diagnoses as a phobia of contamination.

Julien's staging of this moment of castration refers to and, in a clever way, resists one conventional explanation for the acoustic mirroring that hearing is supposed to effect in the subject. The subject's voice has the property, according to Guy Rosolato (from whom Kaja Silverman takes the notion of the acoustic mirror), of "being at the same time emitted and heard, sent and received," internalized at the same time that it is external-

ized; this relationship to one's own voice extends the experience of sound that is presumed to take place in the womb, where hearing is a primary and *omnidirectional* sense.[17] The "subtle" and "archaic" sense that Michel Chion describes in *The Voice in Cinema* develops from the primitive situation of the fetus and the infant: "In the infant's experience, the mother ceaselessly plays hide-and-seek with his visual field. . . . But the olfactory and vocal continuum . . . maintain the mother's presence when she can no longer be seen (in fact, *seeing* her implies at least some distance and separation)."[18] Julien makes reference to these ontogenic arguments by making this scene of listening into a primary source of identity for Fanon. This nostalgic structure is seemingly reinforced by Julien's use of the tableau vivant to stage this and other emblematic scenes, since the frontal, exhibitionist image created by this framing recalls the shot favored in early or so-called "primitive" cinema—the wide, static shot that allowed an entire narrative to be played out in a single take.

But Julien also undercuts this psycho-biological premise by making the *radio* the source of the racially and spatially undifferentiated sounds that inspire Fanon's pleasure and, later, his political energy. The mother is here identified with the incisive injunction *against* listening to "nigger" music, a command that separates inside from outside and you from that or them. (The betrayal of the son by the mother is already one of the film's tropes: the story about Fanon's mother reminds us of the story we have just heard about how the Empress Josephine convinced Napoleon to reinstitute slavery in the colonies, a story that is accompanied by an image of a decapitated and bloodied statue of the empress.) Julien is probably closer here to the conceptions of listening offered by Metz, who emphasizes the indeterminacy of a sound's origin, or by Paul Willemen, whose theory of cinematic enunciation insists upon an "unceasing . . . oscillatory dialogue" between "the subject's sense of identity" and the "image of another."[19] The presence of a technological apparatus, the radio, in Fanon's phantasmatic scene echoes Willemen's suggestion that the subject spoken by cinema is the product of a "filling-in operation reconstituting the fantasy of pre-oedipal plenitude, a fantasy always marked by the symbolic incision of the frame." As is the case with the Freudian concept of testimony, where the metaphor of the technical apparatus is present from the beginning, it is impossible to separate the textual operation from its subject-effects.[20]

In fact, the distance between this scene of listening and a bio-historical point of origin is increased again by the recognition that its construction strongly resembles other scenes of listening in Julien's work, scenes in which forms of identity and community that are unspeakable in the historical situations depicted are "spoken" by the film. In *Young Soul Rebels,* for instance, the mixing of records in a dance-club scene brings together two distinct subcultures—white punks and gay black disco dancers—which had been presented in the diegesis as antagonists. *Looking for Langston* constructs an imaginary world of gay life during the Harlem Renaissance from a combination of fictional period scenes and archival images, including footage from films by Oscar Micheaux, newsreels, and a television appearance by Hughes. The collage of images, which moves around freely in time and history, is mirrored in the soundtrack, which blends the poetry of Hughes, James Baldwin, Bruce Nugent, and Essex Hemphill with Bessie Smith's blues and contemporary dance music. One is tempted to read Julien's habitual use of sound mixing to bridge past and present as an authorial signature; he also encourages such an interpretation by frequently appearing in his films, as in the aforementioned opening sequence of *Looking for Langston,* in which he appears as the corpse in a coffin, taking the places of both Hughes and Baldwin.

But such an autobiographical reading is, at the same time, discouraged by the recognition that scenes of listening appear as frequently in Fanon's own writings. These writings are the other significant point of reference for Julien's use of sound in *Frantz Fanon.*

LISTENING FOR FANON

In *Black Skin, White Masks,* as we noted, Fanon uses an image of synaesthesia—sounds and words that can be seen—to describe the gaze, which he charges with the task of "correcting cultural errors." When Fanon takes up the cause of Algerian nationalism, this critique of perceived truth, particularly spoken truth, remains an important tactic. In *The Wretched of the Earth,* while discussing the mental disorders produced on both sides by the colonial war in Algeria, Fanon notes the variety of devices developed by French medical personnel to compel speech and to break down resistance. These devices include a variety of psycho-sociological and pharmacological "treatments" for the "pathology" of political resistance that French psychiatrists found among the Algerians. Echoing Freud's description of the unconscious as the "internal foreigner" in consciousness, the term used for this resistance is a "corps étranger," or "foreign body." A variety of methods of torture, mockeries of free speech, were intended to "liberate" the victim from the foreign body of politics that had invaded his consciousness: these methods included

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The production of *Frantz Fanon*: Julien directs a scene.

injections of pentothal, or "truth serum," and the play-acting of intellectual communities in which torturers would engage in debate with suspected members of the FLN to convince them of their errors in judgment. According to Fanon, these tortures had the effect of leaving the victim with the feeling that he could no longer trust himself to keep confidences or engage in properly private conversation.

The induction of truth into the body of the prisoner and its consequent extraction by force is, according to classicist Page duBois, a time-honored practice at the heart of the Western concept of truth.[21] Long before the Algerian War—or, for that matter, psychoanalysis—the Greek practice of slave torture established the powerful fiction of the body of the testimonial subject as the origin and container of a truth that was unknown to the subject. Torture appeared to press this truth out of the body through the mouth, in speech. The fiction of a physiological location of unconscious truth is engaged by Freud when he decides that, rather than treating the "mind" for which the patient's testimony serves as evidence, he will work on the patient's words themselves (the event of the dream, for instance, is fabricated in a conversation about it). With rueful sarcasm, Fanon captures the cynical force of this obvious fiction when he observes that there are two categories of people who undergo torture in Algeria: "those who know something" and "those who know nothing."[22] In both cases, torture is intended to turn the victim's own voice against him: the confession that is beaten out of him demonstrates to him—and to those among whom his treatment will be broadcast—that one's own statements ("I know nothing"; "I will never tell what I know") must not be trusted.

The brilliance of Fanon's analysis of Algerian radio is to notice how indigenous practices of listening not only resist this violence, but also submit the concepts of "native" and "traditional" culture to a deconstructive reversal. In the chapter of *A Dying Colonialism* called, in the English translation, "This Is the Voice of Algeria,"[23] Fanon describes how the opposition set in place by the European bourgeoisie in Algeria between the modern

and the traditional, the civilized and the primitive, plays out along the lines of a linkage of property and cultural value specific to the colonial situation:

> For a European to own a radio is of course to participate in the eternal round of Western petty-bourgeois ownership, which extends from the radio to the villa, including the car and the refrigerator. It also gives him the feeling that colonial society is a living and palpitating reality, with its festivities, its traditions eager to establish themselves, its progress, its taking root. But especially, in the hinterland, in the so-called colonization centers, [radio] is the only link with the cities, with Algiers, with the metropolis, with the world of the civilized. It is one of the means of escaping the inert, passive, and sterilizing pressure of the "native" environment.[24]

The counterpart to this colonial fear of contamination by native language and culture is the indigene's "traditional" modesty, which compels him to avoid listening to or even owning a radio, so as to avoid "sex allusions, or even the clownish situations meant to make people laugh," elements of French broadcasts which might "cause an unendurable strain in a family listening to these programs."[25] This concern for respectability is, according to Fanon, a tactic of resistance; when the FLN began broadcasting news of the revolution with its own transmitters, Fanon observes, sales of radios among the native population soared. Similarly, the ability of the colonized to resist the official truths broadcast over Radio-Alger, the organ of the occupying force, with news broadcasts on the Voice of Fighting Algeria had the effect of contaminating this singular truth: "The 'truth' of the oppressor," writes Fanon, "formerly rejected as an absolute lie, was now countered by another, an acted truth. . . . *Because it avowed its own uneasiness, the occupier's lie became a positive aspect of the nation's new truth.*"[26] This contamination, or hybridization, of the official truth extended even to the phenomenology of listening. Since the French jammed and distorted the Algerian broadcasts, groups of listeners relied on a single "interpreter," sitting close to the receiver, to tell them what the broadcasts said; these listeners were often forced to *imagine* that they had heard the news they wanted to hear: "Under these conditions, claiming to have heard the *Voice of Algeria* was, in a certain sense, distorting the truth."[27]

This critique of the originality or authenticity of the voice, or of audible truths more generally, is echoed in Julien's own use of sources, both testimonial and textual. Both Fanon's writing and Julien's film rework metaphors of the voice—the "voice of the people," authorship—to reduce the phenomenal character of speech. The acts of speech and listening that Fanon describes are beset by what Jacques Derrida, describing the "writing machines" in Freud, calls *différance*: a way of recording "living, full speech, master of itself and self-present" that is less a transcription than a translation.[28] The metaphors Freud has to reach for to describe the unconscious introduce into this "full speech" a delay or discrepancy that makes speech into writing, a "non-origin which is originary."[29] If scenes of listening—to torture, to the radio—are Fanon's versions of these "writing machines," their echoes in Julien are less the literal *transcriptions* of these scenes than airs of fantasy, simulation, misrecognition, and error that make us question their accuracy. Julien's way of responding to Fanon's call for an art that corrects cultural errors is, in other words, to make his own.

To borrow the term Olivier Fanon uses in the film to describe his father, I am suggesting, in other words, that we are compelled to read the film's depictions of oral testimony, both documentary and fictive, as attempts to *derange* cinema.[30] Julien's attempt to be faithful to his subject while obeying that subject's revolutionary appeal results in a curious mixture of aural and visual figures. Rather than viewing these instances as errors, however, I am suggesting that they should be regarded as attempts, consistent with Fanon's dialectical analysis of technological culture,[31] to jam the apparatus of visually based film theory and replace the "delirium of clinical perfection" in apparatus theory with the *transferential,* intermittently successful model Mary Ann Doane discovers in Freud.

As the story of Fanon's work on behalf of the Algerian cause unfolds, the film's own voice becomes less and less coherent: contradictions in Fanon's theory and character are expressed in offsetting interviews with followers and critics. But rather than pursuing a purely characterological explanation for these contradictions, *Frantz Fanon* uses them as opportunities to examine the relation between film theory and film practice. The mirror-stage thesis, for instance, becomes a visual trope in the film, as when a mirror appears in the background of the interview with Françoise Vergès about Fanon's interpretation of the mirror-stage. (When Vergès explains that misrecognition prevents the white subject from seeing his black other, Julien places himself, out of focus, in the mirror behind her.) Although Julien is clearly indebted to Laura Mulvey's use of the Freudian lexicon of vision in her foundational essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," the film is at

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The gaze and the gay kiss

least ambivalent about Mulvey's assertion that cinema is defined by the question of "the look," its narrative structure and its psychic function.[32]

Julien is, in fact, so insistent on visualizing Fanon that he sometimes risks overstating Fanon's relation to the theory of the look. One of these moments is the film's interpretation of Fanon's "phobia" of male homosexuality. Fanon's attitude to homosexuality, as Diana Fuss observes, conforms to his own definition of phobia: "When Fanon confesses, 'I have never been able, without revulsion, to hear a *man* say of another man: "He is so sensual!,"' the very form of the enunciation obeys the terms of Fanon's own earlier definition of phobia as 'terror mixed with sexual revulsion.'"[33] When this scene is presented in *Frantz Fanon,* however, this expression of desire is mute and visual, and the aural formulation of the phobia's etiology—"I have never been able . . . to *hear* a man say of another man . . ."—is lost. Fanon is in the foreground watching a male couple kissing and returning his look.

This staging misses the opportunity to link it to Fanon's anxiety about another community from which he was excluded: speakers of Arabic. As Fanon did not speak Arabic well enough to conduct his psychiatric interviews in that language, he was forced to converse with his patients through translators. The film renders this relationship in ways that suggest, again, that this trauma of hearing has effects that make sense only in visual terms. A later series of dramatizations of the case studies from *The Wretched of the Earth* shows Fanon listening to the dreams and symptoms of the French torturers. Julien stages some of these interviews as relations between three bodies, with the Arabic-speaking male nurse present at the rear of the shot, and Fanon and his patient arranged in the foreground and middle distance of the shot, Fanon listening to testimony entirely in English (which stands in for French). By rendering Fanon's response to this testimony as a horrified stare back into the camera, Julien forces these moments to resonate with the traumatic scene in Fanon's biog-

raphy, rather than exploring more fully the comparison between the violence of torture and the violence of testimony.[34]

But what appears to be a simple mistranslation of Fanon's life and theory into visual language can be regarded, from another perspective, as an attempt to remind the viewer of the capacity of the apparatus to break down. It is not enough, after all, to notice that Julien has translated a scene of listening into an illustration of the mirror-stage thesis central to psychoanalytic film theory. The viewer has to recall as well that earlier in the film Stuart Hall has interpreted Fanon's rendering of this theory as critical of its Hegelian and Lacanian sources. If it seems that Julien has, at times, simply displaced the question of listening onto stock figures of the gaze, he seems at other times to take seriously Mulvey's invitation to construct a material, dialectical cinema. Challenging the homology between the spectator's perception and the recording capacity of the documentary apparatus, the film turns evidentiary or indexical signs—particularly the signs of the voice—into textual figures. One of the film's final interviews exemplifies this attempt to effect documentary unpleasure.

The uncanny assonance between the issue of translation in Fanon's practice, as a problem of colonial relations, and the film's effort to find an appropriate audiovisual expression for this problem is amplified in the climactic interview with Joby Fanon, close to the end of the film, where testimonial speech is given the form of a visual fetish. In this densely textured scene, Julien evokes the difference between the subject of film's speech and its speaking subject.[35] Sitting at a table covered with photographs of Fanon, Joby is being interviewed about Fanon's death. He introduces an object that turns out to be Frantz's last letter, written as he was receiving treatment for leukemia in Washington, D.C. As the camera pans from Joby's face to his hands, he fiddles with the letter, which is in a clear plastic cover, and explains its significance in a voiceover delivered from just outside the frame: "When I received it he was already dead." Joby then speaks of the letter in terms that describe it simultaneously as a lens and a voice: "In it you see the very lucid side of Frantz . . . ," and "It is almost an appeal. . . ." In close-up, Joby's hands withdraw the letter from its cover, and he lays his glasses on the table. Finally he begins to read: "I'm writing to give you some news . . ."; and then he can go no further. Overcome with the memory produced by this act of ventriloquism, Joby experiences the rush of visible emotion that documentary filmmakers value so highly, the reason that they bother at all to accompany speech in the interview with a visual record. He waves off the camera, and the scene fades to white.

The film could be understood here simply to return the aural and visual signifiers to their proper places in the cinematic hierarchy, relegating speech to a lifeless corporeality. Julien is, after all, making use of a cliché of documentary: crying, and the interruption of "lucidity" that accompanies it. The performance that conventionally accompanies the emotional display of this effort to remember posits the source of the interviewee's speech in the closet of the body, returning to it an interior cavity that the scopic drive can then appear to unfold. Is Julien aware that he restages here one of the pernicious traditions of documentary, a trope that connects the form to a very ancient justification for torture? Perhaps it is for this reason that, after the fade to white, the film turns from authentic speech to the idiom of the revolutionary martyr. Fanon's death is signified by a series of highly conventional images: first, a staged sequence of funereal clichés (the single tear on the face of an FLN soldier bearing a flag-draped coffin; lilies; mist), and then a newsreel sequence of Algerians casting votes, indicating the passage of the leader into the popular will.

This recourse to a commonplace, exhausted iconography of martyrdom seems designed to highlight, by comparison, the power of the interview as a cinematic device that invents its own iconography. When we return to Joby after the funereal interlude, he has composed himself and continues to read from the letter. Joby's emphasis on the letter's *transparency* as a record of Fanon's final words—a transparency that is described in terms both visual ("lucid") and aural ("appeal")—makes this scene especially difficult to read, since it gives to a document *within* the scene the transcendent capacity of film itself. Indeed, the final words Joby reads are "I was between life and death." Does cinema here

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Signifier of death: Fanon's "funeral"

confront a mirror of its own, the image of a voice, a call, with the power to bring the past—and the dead—to life?

When Roland Barthes describes psychoanalysis as the auditorium in which "listening speaks," he means to capture its intersubjectivity, the reversibility of the unconscious "structured like a language." "The psychoanalyst, attempting to grasp the signifiers," Barthes writes, "learns to 'speak' the language which is his patient's unconscious. . . . Listening is this means of trapping signifiers." Under these conditions, "I am listening" can be translated as "Listen to me."[36] If its technological character prevents cinema—even a film practice based, as documentary is today, on acts of listening—from fully effecting this reversal, this very failure nonetheless provides a language for Julien's portrait of Fanon: a theorist, as the film reminds us at its close, of the irreducible corporeality of "questions," and questions, above all, of the symbolic function of bodies. The various errors, displacements, reversals, and infidelities that the film commits with respect to its sources are the marks of Julien's commitment to a dialectical art of documentary, and to the oscillatory dialogue between film theory and practice.

NOTES

1. See, for instance Alan Read, ed., *The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Representation* (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1996), a volume of essays, dialogues, and images produced out of a conference held at the Institute for Contemporary Art in London in 1995, and Anthony Alessandrini, ed., *Frantz Fanon: Critical Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1999), a collection that began as a panel at the Modern Language Association convention in 1997. Another significant collection from this period is Nigel Gibson, ed., *Rethinking Fanon: The Continuing Dialogue* (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 1999). The long version of the film was shown at the Fanon conference held at New York University in 1996.
2. Homi K. Bhabha, "Is Frantz Fanon Still Relevant?," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (18 March 2005): B15.
3. See Jane M. Gaines, "Introduction: 'The Real Returns,'" in *Collecting Visible Evidence,* ed. Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), esp. 2-6.
4. André Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," in *What Is Cinema?,* Vol. 1, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), 24.
5. The quotation is from Joan Copjec's 1986 essay "The Delirium of Clinical Perfection," quoted in Mary Ann Doane's essay "Remembering Women: Psychical and Historical Constructions in Film Theory," in *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 82. Doane generously points out that it is she herself, along with her co-editors (Patricia Mellencamp and Linda Williams) of *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*, (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984), who is being corrected by Copjec.
6. Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis in the Cinema,* trans. Celia Britton, et al. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982), 7.
7. Doane, "Remembering Women," 83.
8. Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *What Is Cinema?,* Vol. 1, 14.
9. Bazin, "The Myth of Total Cinema," in *What Is Cinema?,* Vol. 1, 20.
10. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks,* trans. Christian Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 202.
11. Ibid., 180.
12. Ibid., 203.
13. Christian Metz, "Aural Objects," trans. Georgia Gurrieri, in *Film Sound: Theory and Practice,* ed. Elisabeth Weis and John Belton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 156.
14. Ibid., 157.
15. In "The After-life of Frantz Fanon: Why Fanon? Why Now? Why *Black Skin, White Masks*?," Hall asserts, somewhat more strongly than he does in his interview in Julien's film, that he considers Fanon to be distancing himself from Lacan, even as Lacan distinguishes his concept of mirror-identification from Hegel's notion of "recognition." Stuart Hall, "The After-life of Frantz Fanon: Why Fanon? Why Now? Why *Black Skin, White Masks*?," in Read, *The Fact of Blackness,* 26-27.
16. Julien makes this claim in an interview with Coco Fusco called "Visualizing Theory," and repeats it in a later essay co-written with Mark Nash, "Frantz Fanon as Film." Although Julien claims to be visualizing Fanon's theory, the sequence of images just described can be read as an illustration of classic statements in film theory on the construction of the spectator's position, such as Jean-Louis Baudry's "The Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematic Apparatus" or Nick Browne's "The Spectator-in-the-Text: The Rhetoric of *Stagecoach*." Coco Fusco, "Visualizing Theory: An Interview with Isaac Julien," *NKA: Journal of Contemporary African Art* 6-7 (Summer/Fall 1997): 54-57; Isaac Julien and Mark Nash, "Frantz Fanon as Film," *The Film Art of Isaac Julien* (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, 2000), 103-10.
17. Rosolato is quoted by Kaja Silverman in *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 80.
18. Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema,* ed. and trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 17.
19. Paul Willemen, "Cinematic Discourse: The Problem of Inner Speech," in *Looks and Frictions: Essays in Cultural Studies and Film Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 41.
20. Ibid., 49. As has been frequently noted, a number of references to optical technologies appear in *The Interpretation of Dreams.* One of Freud's references to aural technologies appears in his 1912 observations on analytic technique, where he suggests that the analyst

    > . . . turn his own unconscious like a receptive organ towards the transmitting unconscious of the patient. He must adjust himself to the patient as a telephone receiver is adjusted to the transmitting microphone. Just as the receiver converts back into sound waves the electric oscillations in the telephone line which were set up by sound waves, so the doctor's unconscious is able, from the derivatives of the unconscious which are communicated to

him, to reconstruct that unconscious, which has determined the patient's free associations.

Sigmund Freud, "Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psycho-Analysis" (1912), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Vol. 12, ed. and trans. James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1958), 115-16.

21. See her remarkable book *Torture and Truth* (New York: Routledge, 1991), which begins with a description of torture devices—"macchine atroci"—at an exhibition that duBois visited in Rome. One of these devices stands out from the rest because of its "graceless, banal, ugly" modernity; unlike the others, its function is not immediately apparent, although it appears to have some connection to listening, since it looks "something like a microphone, with electrodes dangling from it" (3). Although she recognizes the device from accounts of torture in the Americas and "films of the Algerian war" (3), duBois purposely leaves its identity obscure, in part to allow it to function as an emblem for her entire study of the Greek concept of *basanos,* a term which meant "a test or trial to determine whether something or someone is real or genuine," and then, some time later, "comes to mean also inquiry by torture, 'the question'" (7).
22. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 281.
23. John Mowitt notes that the translation of this chapter title that appears in *A Dying Colonialism,* without the quotation marks that accompany it in the original French (where it appears as "'*Ici la voix de l'Algérie*'"), loses the "conspicuously cited character" of the phrase. John Mowitt, "Breaking Up Fanon's Voice," in Alessandrini, *Frantz Fanon,* 89-98. My reading of Fanon's chapter is indebted to Mowitt's.
24. Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism,* trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 71.
25. Fanon, *Wretched,* 70.
26. Ibid., 76.
27. Ibid., 89. Fanon notes, as well, changes in the psychotic reception of voices, changes he links to the use of radio by the revolutionary forces:

> Before 1954, in the psychopathological realm, the radio was an evil object, anxiogenic, accursed.
>
> After 1954, the radio assumed totally new meanings. The phenomenon of the wireless and the receiver set lost their coefficient of hostility, were stripped of their character of extraneousness, and became part of the coherent order of the nation. In hallucinatory psychoses after 1956, the radio voice became protective, friendly. Insults and accusations disappeared and gave way to words of encouragement (89).

28. Jacques Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing," in *Writing and Difference,* trans. Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 199. What Derrida says in "Freud and the Scene of Writing" resonates with the thinking of analyst Nicolas Abraham, whose work Derrida helped introduce to French theory. In his essay "The Shell and the Kernel," Abraham uses the concept of translation to describe psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis, he writes, "stakes out its domain precisely on this *unthought* ground of phenomenology." In doing so, psychoanalysis raises a question about discourse itself:

> . . . how to include in a discourse—in any one whatever—that very thing which in essence, by dint of being the precondition of discourse, escapes it? If non-presence, the kernel and ultimate ground of all discourse, is made to speak, can it—must it—make itself heard in and through presence to self?

Nicolas Abraham, "The Shell and the Kernel," trans. Nicolas Abraham, *Diacritics,* vol. 9, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 19. As Derrida observes in his commentary on this essay, these suggestions of an *other place* within the psyche, a place from which the subject's unthinkable thoughts issue in a way that is unreasonable or illegible to the auditor located in the conscious mind, imply the problematic of translation. This is an odd and "difficult to think" conception of translation, Derrida admits, since "any discourse thus translating its own condition will itself still be conditioned and to that extent . . . will miss its mark." Jacques Derrida, "Me-Psychoanalysis: An Introduction to the Translation of 'The Shell and the Kernel' by Nicolas Abraham," trans. Richard Klein, *Diacritics,* vol. 9, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 6.

29. Derrida, "Freud," 203.
30. "*Déranger*" is usually translated as "to disturb," but can also mean "mixing" or "disordering," terms with a particular relevance to Julien's own cinematic craft.
31. On the technological character of Fanon's revolutionary persona, see Mowitt, esp. 92-95. My analysis of the contradictions in *Frantz Fanon*'s "voice" applies some of the arguments that Bill Nichols makes about interview-based documentary in his useful essay "The Voice of Documentary," where he deals at length with the work of Emile de Antonio, a filmmaker Julien's style of editing draws from. Bill Nichols, "The Voice of Documentary," in *Movies and Methods,* Vol. 2, ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 258-73.
32. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), 25.
33. Diana Fuss, "Interior Colonies: Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Identification," *Diacritics,* vol. 24, no. 2–3 (Summer/Autumn 1994): 33.
34. The longer, 35mm, version of the film does make an emblematic reference to torture, according to Julien and Nash's essay "Frantz Fanon as Film," by ending with a passage from *Black Skin, White Masks* on the resistance that the body of the interrogated subject offers the torturer. Julien and Nash, 110.
35. Or, in the terms Paul Willemen uses in his essay on cinematic inner speech, "the difference between the subject-image produced by a text and the historical, biological subject which presided over its manufacture." Willemen, 41.
36. Roland Barthes, "Listening," in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), 252, 256, 246.

JONATHAN KAHANA teaches in the Department of Cinema Studies at New York University. He is completing a book on the public spheres of American documentary.

ABSTRACT Sound production and reception are central to the film and video work of Isaac Julien. In his film biography of Frantz Fanon, unconventional uses of documentary sound carry Julien's challenge to the cinematic theory of the gaze, and to the visual social order reflected in it.

■ **Sergio Rizzo**

WHY LESS IS STILL MOORE

Celebrity and the Reactive Politics of *Fahrenheit 9/11*

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Michael Moore at the 75th Annual Academy Awards

THE CONSERVATIVE ANIMUS toward Michael Moore's success is to be expected. But what is the liberal-left's problem with the filmmaker? Throughout his career, Moore's work has garnered a host of moral judgments and criticisms from left-leaning journalists and scholars who are sympathetic to either the message or the objectives of his films, but see his tactics as, at best, counterproductive. Even in the face of Bush's reelection and the box-office success of *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), many on the left have tried, with varying degrees of success, to embrace the message (or some part of it) while rejecting the messenger. What are some of the reasons for this "liberal schizophrenia," as the conservative commentator Jonah Goldberg labels it, and are they valid?[1]

Although partially true, it is not enough to say Moore's numerous critics on the left are just signs of his success. Moore himself is partly to blame. Positioning himself as the working-class outsider, he alienates mainstream Democrats (often accusing them of being "wimps" and "sellouts") and those to the left of the Democratic Party as well. In a guest column he wrote for *The Nation,* speaking for the likes of "Tony the furnace installer," he ripped into the readers of *The Nation* as a bunch of "arrogant, self-righteous and dreadfully predictable" lefties out of touch with "real people."[2] In a *Cineaste* interview, Moore responded to the charge of being too simplistic in his films in the following manner:

> The people who complain that I'm being too simplistic have usually spent too many years in school. They didn't complete their degree in the allocated time and they have been thinking about things a little too much. They forget that some things are quite simple. Let me spell it out—Murder: bad. Feeding children: good. Some of the left intelligentsia want to complicate matters because in part they love to hear themselves talk and in part they love the mental masturbation that goes on regarding theory.[3]

The message is clear: Don't waste your time trying to turn this boy from Flint into one of your organic intellectuals. Elsewhere, he is more forgiving toward those who "love the mental masturbation that goes on regarding theory." But for the most part, his anti-intellectualism asserts itself as an integral and more-or-less conscious element of his working-class shtick.[4]

Although Moore's anti-intellectualism is an undeniable part of the working-class persona he so successfully markets, it helps those who would dismiss his films and political vision as simplistic, when in fact they are anything but that. How can you fit a character like the sheriff in *Roger and Me* (1989) into a Manichean opposition of good and bad? The sheriff, once a worker

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on the auto assembly lines himself, has escaped that fate only to find himself with the unpleasant job of evicting laid-off autoworkers from their homes. His moral dilemma is shared by all of us who work to maintain our privileges and rewards in a dehumanizing system. For another example, consider what happens in *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) as Moore works through and discards his own explanations for why the United States has such a disproportionate number of gun-related deaths. His initial belief that the availability of guns is the cause gives way to a more nuanced position as he considers the example of Canada—a country with many gun owners, but without the gun-related violence. He considers other explanations, such as a "culture of fear" promulgated by the American media, but none of them solve what Moore learns is a complex problem. In *Fahrenheit 9/11* there is, of course, the character of Lila Lipscomb, the mother whose son dies fighting in Iraq. With unobtrusive sympathy, Moore carefully allows the viewer to follow the mother through the painful process of moral reevaluation that her son's death forces upon her. At all of these points in his films, Moore successfully negotiates between his roles as regular working-class guy and left-wing social critic.

These roles of regular guy and social critic are stabilized by what Paul Arthur, in "Jargons of Authenticity (Three American Moments)," calls Moore's "reflexive abnegation,"[5] which authorizes him to reveal the truth even as it disavows his authority to do so. Speaking specifically of *Roger and Me,* he explains how "Moore's social solidarity is grounded in a trope of technical awkwardness, a feigned inadequacy and victimization defined against the ruthless instrumentality of General Motors—and, by extension, Hollywood."[6] However, without the visual confrontation of some larger-than-life adversary (GM, Nike, the NRA, the Bush administration) and the implied cinematic context of Hollywood fiction, his working-class identification becomes harder to maintain in the medium of print.[7]

Apart from his persona's anti-intellectual or working-class features (he implicitly and repeatedly sees the two as related), Moore's self-centered filmmaking has other difficulties. For Moore, turning the decade of 60s on its head, the political is personal. Writing for *The New Yorker,* Larissa MacFarquhar argues that Moore's personal politics contrasts with the activism of the 60s, which was aimed at changing or getting rid of oppressive institutions, while Moore's activism tries only to humiliate specific individuals: Roger Smith, Phil Knight, Charlton Heston, and George Bush.[8] Moore's brand of personal politics strikes a chord with many who feel lost and alienated within the increasingly intricate and impersonal institutions that dominate their lives. If one can't beat the system, one settles for taking down its representatives in a media-saturated environment obsessed with exposure.

Many contend—and Moore's comments endorse the idea—that *Fahrenheit 9/11* succeeds because, compared to his earlier films, we see less of the filmmaker. However, we don't see less of Moore in *Fahrenheit 9/11.* We see less of a specific role he has popularized—the gonzo journalist breaking the rules of staid documentary film. Certain scenes replay this familiar role, as when Moore rides around in an ice-cream truck reading the Patriot Act through a bullhorn, or when he confronts members of Congress with a petition to enlist their children in the war in Iraq. But for the most part, Moore's onscreen persona adopts the conventional documentary roles of interviewer, explicator, and sympathetic observer. Nonetheless, Moore encourages the notion that less of what he calls his "antics" means less of him. In an interview with Gavin Smith in *Film Comment,* Moore says:

> Harvey [Weinstein] was very disappointed that he didn't see my mug every three minutes in the film. And I tried to explain to him that a little bit of me goes a long way. And in this film especially, just let the story tell itself. It's clearly my voice, it's my vision, but I just thought it was best that I keep my antics to a minimum.[9]

Aligning his onscreen presence with the commercial interests represented by Weinstein, Moore suggests the extent to which his image has become an almost alien force threatening the story's ability to "tell itself" and, even, Moore's own voice and vision. Later in the interview, he argues that his diminished presence is part of the film's political effectiveness:

> [A]nd that's part of why I don't think I need as much of me in the film. I don't want the public to think that I'm the one who's going to correct the problem. I am not going to correct it. I'm asking them to do that. I'm asking them to join with me and I'll join with them. I don't want them to sit there passively and watch me and vicariously live through me, sort of a, "Yeah, go get 'em Mike!" Nuh-uh. I'm sorry. I'm not going to get them for you.[10]

But if *Fahrenheit 9/11* represents the filmmaker's attempt to start excising his onscreen persona from his

documentaries, what he says of his next project indicates his desire to further the process: "My goal is for the camera to become the character so that you actually never see me."[11]

In one sense, it shouldn't be too surprising to hear Moore expressing a desire for the total transparency and "objectivity" of direct cinema, since, as Arthur argues, Moore and other recent filmmakers who advance their subjective presence within the documentary narrative "remain wedded to the same principles of authenticity, if not the same rhetorical codings, as earlier styles . . . substitut[ing] reflexive abnegation for New Deal and direct cinema paradigms of authority."[12] Because of Moore's celebrity, by the time of *Fahrenheit 9/11* his onscreen persona can no longer sustain the myth of immediacy that documentary films traditionally rely upon.

Moore's stardom pressures him to diminish his onscreen role in several ways. Because of his celebrity, he now has access to those who are invested with institutional power. Unlike Roger Smith, they know what Moore can do when he is locked out. Consider the affable greeting Phil Knight gives Moore in *The Big One* (1997), or Charlton Heston's spontaneous invitation upon hearing the filmmaker is in his driveway in *Bowling for Columbine*. In contrast, in *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Moore goes out of his way to suggest that despite (or perhaps because of) his celebrity, he doesn't have access to the president. At a "Bush for Governor" event, we see the filmmaker in a crowd of people calling out to Bush, who chides him, "Behave yourself, will you? Go find real work." Bush's response acknowledges Moore's celebrity and suggests the candidate's wish to avoid an interview.

When Moore does get the big showdown interview with his opponents, one unintended effect is that he personalizes the institutional forces they represent, and in the process of the interview it's not always clear—at least not to many viewers—who is the more sympathetic figure, Moore or his opponent. On the other hand, his celebrity also undermines his direct access to less high-profile subjects or "ordinary people." In explaining how, for *Fahrenheit 9/11,* he got to film the Marine recruiters as they worked a strip mall, Moore admits that he "can't be present at some of the things [they] shoot now."[13] As Moore's stature and technical proficiency grow, it becomes harder, if not impossible, for him to maintain, as he does in *Roger and Me,* a sense of social solidarity through his "trope of technical awkwardness, feigned inadequacy and victimization."[14]

As a star, Moore has to look elsewhere to maintain a sense of social solidarity with his audience. Within his films, he is no longer able to maintain his persona as the little guy crusading against the big corporations. Instead, he looks for ways to do this outside of his films—for example, his acceptance speech for *Bowling for Columbine* at the Academy Awards and the well-publicized censorship controversy surrounding *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Implicitly included in his critique of corporate capitalism in his earlier films, Hollywood now becomes an explicit target: "There're six studios. I burned my bridges at two of them, Fox and Disney. So, you know, four to go!"[15]

While Moore is adept at playing the outsider on the inside, this can only take him so far. He still looks for a way to create a sense of social solidarity from the narrative structure of his film. Following the interviewer's line of questioning, Moore talks about the ending of *Fahrenheit 9/11* in terms of his interview with Charlton Heston at the end of *Bowling for Columbine*:

> That's right. If I had somehow gotten an interview or a few moments with Bush—I sort of didn't want that to happen, because I didn't want to end the movie with the audience in a collective Bronx cheer toward Bush on the screen as he gets his comeuppance. Catharsis can be a good thing, and I think at points in this film you may feel that, but I'm not going to let you have the ultimate high [laughs] and then just go home. The catharsis has to happen on November 2.[16]

The amount of cathartic closure Moore's interview with Heston gives is debatable, and so is the belief that the absence of a showdown interview with Bush in *Fahrenheit 9/11* makes for a more open movie and politically responsive audience—trading in the "ultimate high" of a collective Bronx cheer for the catharsis of the voting booth. The comment, like others he makes, promotes the popular idea that reducing his onscreen presence makes the film less about him and thus more politically empowering.

Nevertheless, just how closed-ended the movie really is becomes clear when Moore explains the movie in terms of French film theory, specifically comparing *Fahrenheit 9/11*'s ending to the avant-garde practices of *film d'intervention.*[17] The point of *film d'intervention,* however—the way its open-ended representations of reality empower the audience—is that it encourages the viewer to see that he or she has choices in the real world. It doesn't tell the viewer what choice to make. *Fahrenheit 9/11,* from beginning to end, argues that the viewer has no choice—other than the filmmaker's: "I hope that people go see this movie and throw the bastard out of office."[18] But the notion of *Fahrenheit*

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Fahrenheit 9/11: On Capitol Hill, Congressman John Tanner (D-TN) talks to Michael Moore.

9/11 as a film awaiting completion in the real world is repeated in Moore's introduction to *The Official Fahrenheit 9/11 Reader,* ending with: "Right now, it's a movie that in some ways, though finished, is still a work in progress, its true ending to be written on November 2, 2004, and the months that follow. That makes all of you my cowriters."[19] This rhetoric of participation in an open-ended project flatly contradicts the movie's polemical agenda that sees the audience not so much as "co-writers," but more like actors waiting to complete their scripted roles.

The tension in Moore's rhetoric about *Fahrenheit 9/11* reflects a tension Matthew Bernstein finds in *Roger and Me*. Using Bill Nichols' distinction between interactive and expository documentary modes—in the interactive mode the filmmaker is a subjective agent open to the uncertainties and vicissitudes of historical time, whereas in the expository mode the filmmaker assumes the authority of a perspective removed from the uncertainties of historical consciousness and objectifies his or her subjects in order to illustrate some preconceived idea—Bernstein argues that while *Roger and Me* begins in the interactive mode, where the filmmaker is shaped and influenced by the subjects he films, what follows is an expository mode, where "every encounter serves to illustrate Moore's preconceived thesis."[20] *Fahrenheit 9/11*'s narrative repeats a similar pattern. The movie's introduction suggests an interactive mode as Moore's voiceover responds to a scene of Al Gore celebrating victory in Florida with the question, "Was it all a dream?" The opening scene presents Moore as a subject in open-ended history who, like the viewer, can't be certain about what it is he or she is viewing. Moore's narration then draws the viewer's attention to specific individuals in his dreamscape: "Look, there's Ben Affleck, he's often in my dreams. And the *Taxi Driver* guy. He was there, too, and little Stevie Wonder, he, he seemed so happy, like a miracle had taken place. Was it a dream?" The references to actors and entertainers emphasize Moore's difference from them. In contrast to these and other more harmful actors (such as Bush and his administration), Moore will guide the viewer to the truth. The radical uncertainty of the movie's beginning sets up the revelation of this truth as the mounting evidence—from the Florida vote count to the Bush family's ties with the Saudis to the lack of WMDs—urges the viewer to accept Moore's position: we need to "throw the bastard out of office."

Moore's commitment to the expository mode is found in his attempt to explain the difference between fiction and nonfiction film in his introduction to *The Official Fahrenheit 9/11 Reader*:

> Besides the fact that documentaries generally don't use actors, they are a style of filmmaking that is different from fiction features in that they are written after the movie is shot. You enter the editing room with hundreds of hours of footage, and then you must decide what your story is and construct—write—it. It's definitely a cart-before-the-horse system, which in some ways makes it much more challenging than fiction films, where the writer just tells everyone what to say. We can't tell George Bush what to say or John Ashcroft what to sing. But what we do with what is said requires a lot of noodling—to determine where it all fits into the basic story we are trying to tell.[21]

The first assumption to question is Moore's claim, presented as self-evident, that fiction films use actors while nonfiction films use "real people." This popular distinction ignores how, through editing and scripting, documentary subjects are given roles and enact the director's message or story. Moore indicates as much when he says elsewhere, "Bush is the star of the movie!"[22] The popular understanding of real people in documentary film allows Moore to minimize its fictional or interpretive features—its "noodling" of reality—even as he acknowledges that the story "constructs" the reality that the viewer sees.

Moore uses the popular distinction between (Hollywood) fiction and nonfiction film because, consciously or not, it helps him to maintain the sense of documentary film's access to unmediated reality. One can understand Moore's tendency to defend his film as a "mountain of information and facts"[23] when a vast

right-wing assortment of cranks, pajamahadeen, journalists, pundits, and conservative advocacy groups are dedicated to attacking his work and himself.[24] But as Moore emphasizes his movie's factual accuracy it puts him at odds with his postmodern sources of authority —his recognition that "It's all performance at some level."[25]

As Moore loses the sense of social solidarity enacted through the postmodern subjectivity of his on-screen persona—his role as the author of the story who lacks the authority to tell it—he looks to replace it by preserving and elevating another postmodern feature of his filmmaking, his inconclusive or "open" endings. However, the course of political action that the pre-*Fahrenheit 9/11* films inspire is tenuous and unclear. The most that Moore can say is that he hopes the audience will go and do something, "whatever that something might be."[26] Moore is far less vague about the effect *Fahrenheit 9/11* will have on the audience. The film, he proclaims, "will be like Toto pulling the curtain back so the [American] people can see what is really going on, and they're going to be shocked, and they're going to be in awe, and they are going to respond accordingly."[27] However, the relative purpose of *Fahrenheit 9/11*'s political message, compared with Moore's other films, has less to do with his presence in the film or its unfinished ending than the film's target. A standing president during the election season, unlike the CEO of GM or Nike, or the Chairman of the NRA, is subject to the will of the electorate—unless the Supreme Court says otherwise—and affords viewers specific and broader courses of action.

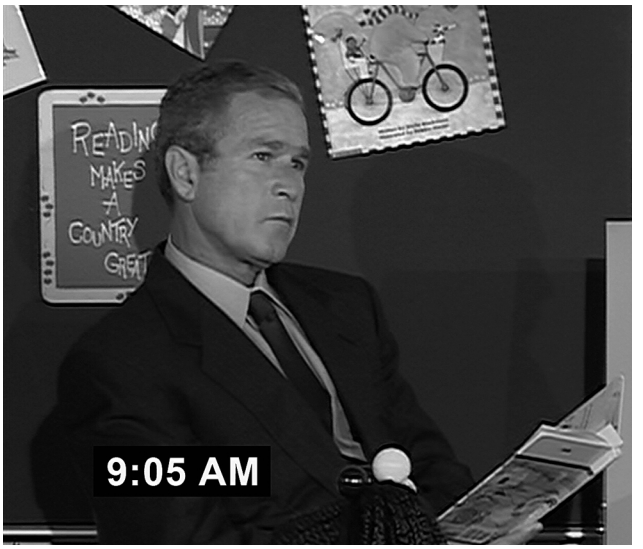
And what the audience did was impressive. Beyond its ability to galvanize the base of the Democratic Party—and despite attempts by the Bush reelection campaign to characterize the movie's audience as limited to New York and L.A.—the movie drew crowds in red as well as blue states and served as a fundraiser and motivator for the Kerry campaign.[28] Such a response should qualify concerns about Moore's political satire as too cynical and fostering hopelessness from those who find him too postmodern,[29] or those like Bernstein who find him not postmodern enough. And yet, Moore may be part of a larger evolution in public discourse that must be engaged in theoretical—as well as practical—terms. Drawing a distinction between the historical consciousness of documentary film and the ahistorical simulation of reality TV, Bill Nichols points out:

> The danger exists that actual struggles will take their cue from the rhythms of TV: specific issues and events will become a target of concern or outrage; emotions will wax and wane in keeping with the dramatic curve of televised coverage. . . . Coalitions, support groups, ad hoc committees and rallies will spring up. Collective identities take shape and a common agenda will emerge. But the specific event will eventually reach a point of resolution. The forces once mobilized with fervor and outrage will disperse, potentially available for the next contingency. Such a pattern constructs a reactive politics that may mirror, in disturbing ways, the very forms of absorption and distraction that should be among its primary targets.[30]

Nichols' distinction helps us to appreciate both the success and failure of *Fahrenheit 9/11*. The film successfully mobilized "fervor and outrage" in response to the contingency of Bush's reelection, shaping a common agenda: vote for the Man Who Isn't Bush. Nonetheless, the "reactive politics" of *Fahrenheit 9/11,* both in terms of its message and method, revealed its practical and theoretical limitations.

On the practical level, the message of the movie, which the Democratic Party at least tacitly adopted, was unable to win. The truism proved correct. You have to give voters something to vote for, not just against. Of course, the Democratic Party *tried* to give the voters something to vote for. They attempted to incorporate Moore and his message into the conventional campaign strategy. As Chris Lehane, the Democratic strategist hired by Moore to handle publicity for *Fahrenheit 9/11,* expressed it: "[Moore] is doing the heavy lifting and making the negative arguments against Bush . . . while allowing [Kerry] to focus on his positive message."[31] However, the spectacular success of Moore's negative message (and images) dwarfed Kerry's "positive message," yet it was still unable to surmount the positive portrayal of Bush as a leader winning the war on terror disseminated through Republican campaign ads, the Fox News network, and news coverage of the presidency that traditionally favors the incumbent.

On the theoretical level, the movie cannot interrogate its own reliance on the media practices that it exposes and questions. One of the movie's strengths—perhaps more compelling even than its message about Bush—is the way it attacks the gross failures of the mainstream media coverage of the 2000 election and the war in Iraq. So Moore reveals what television coverage sanitizes, leaves out, or minimizes: the makeup applied to Bush and his cabinet members before going on TV; the eggs thrown at the presidential motorcade; the African-American members of Congress protesting the



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George W. Bush reads "My Pet Goat."

disenfranchisement of their constituents; soldiers hyped up on heavy metal and destruction; prisoner abuse; children with ghastly wounds; grieving mothers. All these images are true and need to be seen. But, ultimately, they don't go beyond a reactive politics that only partially challenges the "forms of absorption and distraction that should be among its primary targets." Moore is interested less in decoding the television news and the dehistoricizing power of its images than he is in creating competing images.

Moore is quite right to claim the TV news doesn't "run Bush the way he really says things. They filter it, they cut it together, and they do their best to make him look presidential and somewhat smart."[32] But in exposing their filtering, Moore claims to show "Bush unfiltered."[33] The message to the viewers is that they can't trust television, but they can trust Michael Moore. Somewhat ironically, they can do this because, unlike the television reporter who claims to be an "objective reporter with no feelings or opinions," Moore admits his bias, "I'm upfront with what I believe. You know right from the get-go where I'm coming from."[34] But Moore's subjective reporting, for all of its candor, rests upon the same assumption made by objective reporting, that at some fundamental level one can separate "facts" from "opinion." So Moore brags, "I don't get sued because my facts are correct. I libel no one. My opinions are my own and they may or may not be correct, but let's have that debate."[35] The belief in a set of correct and coherent facts that precedes debatable opinion is also what informs the claim Fox News makes to transparency: "Fair and Balanced. We Report and You Decide."

Just how vulnerable the images (if not the message) of *Fahrenheit 9/11* are to the "absorption and distraction" of television was made apparent a couple of days before the election, not long after the ethereal image of Osama bin Laden appeared in a video of his own making. He ridiculed Bush by apparently referencing a scene in Moore's movie: "It appeared to [President Bush] that a little girl's talk about her goat and its butting was more important than the planes and their butting of the skyscrapers. That gave us three times the required time to carry out the operations, thank God." Initially, as Democrats and Republicans scrambled to spin bin Laden's announcement, not much was made of the reference to *Fahrenheit 9/11,* that is until New York mayor Rudy Giuliani appeared on Tim Russert's *Meet the Press* (31 October 2004). "But [bin Laden] certainly wants Bush out of the White House," Giuliani reasoned, adding, "[bin Laden] went on and repeated Michael Moore's diatribe against President Bush almost word for word. As if he watched that movie and had been influenced by it in some way." With skillful opportunism, Giuliani linked Moore with bin Laden, trying to neutralize both Moore's critique of Bush and the video's reminder that the president had failed to capture or kill bin Laden. Giuliani felt the point bore repeating: "Instead of being able to attack us, thank God, now what [bin Laden] has to do is reduce himself to making some kind of political documentary [with laughter] repeating Michael Moore's criticism." After suggesting Moore's unpatriotic "diatribe" may have given unintentional (let us hope) aid and comfort to bin Laden—raising Moore to the level of the Father of Terrorism himself—he reverses the relationship in the second reference and reduces bin Laden to Moore's level—the Father of Terrorism becomes merely a maker of political documentaries. The political filmmaker is as bad as a terrorist; and yet the terrorist is only as bad as a political filmmaker. The contradiction indicates the power of the image, a power that ultimately must be denied.

From innocent home video to scathing blockbuster polemic to terrorist propaganda to Republican spin, one is struck by the inherent instability of these proliferating images—how quickly they can be appropriated to serve such vastly different purposes. In the face of such radical uncertainty, one can only look back in wonder at the early days of film and the utopian aspirations of someone like Bolesaw Matuszwski, who pioneered the archiving of film for historical documentation. It was his belief that film evidence would one day "shut the mouth of the liar."[36] Despite Moore's best efforts to do just that, it is unrealistic, although

understandable, to expect that he could—an expectation the filmmaker wasn't reluctant to encourage. Although we should congratulate and thank Moore for what he gave us, we should maintain a healthy skepticism toward it as well.

NOTES

1. Jonah Goldberg, "It's a Wonderful Lie," *National Review* (26 July 2004). Periodical Abstracts, via Statewide Illinois Library Catalog, http://firstsearch.oclc.org.
2. Michael Moore, "Is the Left Nuts? (Or, Is It Me?)," *The Nation* (17 November 1997). Academic Search Elite, via EBSCO Host, http://www.bll.epnet.com.
3. Dan Georgakas and Barbara Saltz, "Michael and Us: An Interview with Michael Moore," *Cineaste,* vol. 23, no. 3 (1998). Periodical Abstracts, http://firstsearch.oclc.org.
4. Given the way Moore uses his working-class history to defend himself from attacks, but also to launch them, one should look at the sources Moore claims for it growing up in Flint, Michigan. What one finds is that his father's lifetime spent as an autoworker and his mother's job as a clerk provided a comfortable lifestyle for Moore and his two sisters. John Lusk, who went to high school with Moore, describes the suburb he grew up in as "lily white . . . solid middle class. It was idyllic. . . . But you'd think listening to Mike [that he] lived in the pits of the Flint depression." (Lusk is quoted in Matt Labash's article "Michael Moore, One-Trick Phony," *The Weekly Standard* [8 June 1998].) At the very least, one should subject Moore's working-class persona to the same skepticism that his films use in unmasking CEO's, movie stars, and political leaders.
5. Paul Arthur, "Jargons of Authenticity (Three American Moments)," in *Theorizing Documentary,* ed. Michael Renov (New York: Routledge, 1993), 133.
6. Ibid., 130-31. Not all viewers were willing to play along with Moore's "feigned inadequacy and victimization." Matthew Bernstein cites Richard Schickel's review of *Roger and Me* in *Time*: "'Far from being a hick, Moore is an experienced professional journalist who knows perfectly well that getting in to see the chairman of anything without an appointment is virtually impossible.'" But Schickel's huffy refusal was the rare exception. Quoted in Matthew Bernstein, "Documentaphopia and Mixed Modes," *Documenting the Documentary,* ed. Barry Keith Grant and Jeanette Sloniowski (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 408.
7. Tellingly, it is in his books where his working-class performance strains credulity the most, as when, albeit as a joke, he tells the reader to overlook grammar errors he has made or he "confesses" his lack of higher education. It is also in print that his rhetoric reveals the stress of negotiating between his roles as working-class regular guy and left-wing social critic. Take, for example, this schmaltzy and forced apology that comes after a scathing denunciation of the United States in his book *Stupid White Men*: "I hate writing these words. I *love* this big lug of a country and the crazy people in it." See Michael Moore, *Stupid White Men* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 93.
8. Larissa MacFarquhar, "The Populist," *The New Yorker* (February 16 and 23, 2004): 132-45.
9. Gavin Smith, "The Ending Is Up to You," *Film Comment* (July/August 2004): 22.
10. Ibid., 26.
11. Ibid.
12. Arthur, 133.
13. Quoted in Smith, 26.
14. Arthur, 130.
15. Despite Moore's professed concerns about finding a distributor for *Fahrenheit 9/11, Time* reports that Harvey Weinstein, who picked the film up after it was dropped by Disney, had quite a different response to the controversy surrounding *Fahrenheit 9/11*. On the night of its premier at Cannes, the article says, Weinstein "paced nearby and chortled, 'They say I've lost my edge? Have I lost my edge?' He had not. He spent the rest of the week negotiating with a flock of U.S. distributors hoping to profit from the film's marketable notoriety" ("The Art of Burning Bush," *Time* [May 31, 2004]. Periodical Abstracts, http://firstsearch.oclc.org).
16. Quoted in Smith, 25.
17. Ibid., 26.
18. Ibid., 22.
19. Michael Moore, *The Official Fahrenheit 9/11 Reader* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), xvii.
20. Bernstein, "Documentaphopia," 409.
21. Moore, *The Official Fahrenheit 9/11 Reader,* xvi. The distinction that fiction films are written before they are shot whereas nonfiction films are written afterwards also elides how interpretation mediates the real-life material that documentaries are presumed to give unmediated access to. Moore's claim, "We can't tell George Bush what to say," is particularly unreflective given a scene that the movie made famous. Using footage from an amateur video of the president made while he visited elementary school children for a photo-op in Florida, Moore exposes the president's painfully evident stupefaction upon hearing of the 9/11 attack. In Moore's reconstruction of the scene, he skillfully manages to put quite a few words as well as images in Bush's mind, if not his mouth. While the scene in the Florida schoolroom does this explicitly, it's no less true for other scenes where Moore uses Bush's own words on and off the record—jokes made at a fundraiser dinner, a quip on the golf course, or the contortion of a new meaning out of an old saying (as only Bush can). In all these scenes, Moore can and does "tell George Bush what to say."
22. Daniel Fierman, "The Passion of Michael Moore," *Entertainment Weekly* (16 July 2004). Online: http://michaelmoore.com.
23. Moore, *The Official Fahrenheit 9/11 Reader,* xvi.
24. The rabid *Michael Moore Is a Big Fat Stupid White Man,* by David T. Hardy and Jason Clarke, is a case in point. Even conservative readers who reviewed the book on a Website selling it (www.conservativebookservice.com) were disturbed by the authors' tone. While more restrained, *Fahrenhype 9/11* (Alan Peterson, 2004), the first of several movies rebutting Moore's film, suggests it only wants to confirm what people already knew with the tagline, "You knew it was a lie. . . . Now you'll know why."
25. Quoted in Smith, 25.
26. Quoted in Georgakas and Saltz.
27. Quoted in Jason Zengerle, "Crashing the Party," *The New Republic* (19 July 2004). Periodical Abstracts, http://firstsearch.oclc.org.

28. MoveOn.Org used the film as an organizing tool, hosting more than 4,000 house parties across the country and drawing some 55,000 people. The National Education Association showed the film to its 11,000 members at its annual convention, as did the NAACP. The Congressional Black Caucus held a series of events around *Fahrenheit 9/11*. At a VIP screening in Washington, D.C., the movie was attended by prominent Democratic members of Congress. Early on, the Kerry campaign kept its distance from the film, but switched track when they invited Moore as a speaker to the Democratic convention. Perhaps this decision was influenced by the fact that the campaign scored a two-day fundraising record of five million dollars, via the Internet, during the movie's opening, causing *Time* reporters Desa Philadelphia and Jeffrey Resner to speculate, "Moviegoers may be plunking down their $9 at the multiplexes, then going home and e-mailing more money to the Man Who Isn't Bush." See Desa Philadelphia and Jeffrey Resner, "The World According to Michael," *Time* (12 July 2004). Periodical Abstracts, http://firstsearch.oclc.org.
29. See, for example, Kevin Mattson's "The Perils of Michael Moore: Political Criticism in an Age of Entertainment," *Dissent,* vol. 50, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 75-80.
30. Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 60.
31. Quoted in Dan Gilgoff and Michael Tobin, "Moore or Less," *U.S. News & World Report* (12 July 2004). Periodical Abstracts, http://firstsearch.oclc.org.
32. Quoted in Smith, 25.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Quoted in Fierman.
36. Quoted in Erik Barnouw, *Documentary* (New York: Oxford University Press), 29.

SERGIO RIZZO is an independent scholar who teaches American literature and popular culture; his current work focuses on the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger as Governor of California.

ABSTRACT Borrowing Bill Nichols' distinction between documentary film and reality TV, this piece evaluates *Fahrenheit 9/11* in terms of its "reactive politics." Although successful, the film's political effectiveness is compromised by Michael Moore's celebrity. Unable to sustain the tropes of social solidarity of his earlier films, he resorts to strategies that ultimately undermine his political objectives.

CLASSICS REVISITED

Donkey Skin (Peau d'âne)

Director: Jacques Demy. Producer: Mag Bodard. Writer: Demy, based on the fairy tale by Charles Perrault. Music: Michel Legrand. Cinematographer: Ghislain Cloquet. Editor: Anne-Marie Cotret. Koch Lorber.

For the last decade or so, Agnès Varda has been treating audiences around the world to vibrant restorations of the sumptuous films of her late husband and fellow New Wave luminary, Jacques Demy (1931-1990). Varda's tireless efforts have led us to rediscover such gems as *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (1964), *The Young Girls of Rochefort* (1967), and *Lola* (1961). A welcome addition to all this recovered cinematic treasure is the out-of-this-world musical fantasy, *Peau d'âne* (*Donkey Skin*, a.k.a. *The Magic Donkey*, 1970), recently restored under the supervision of Mathieu Demy (actor son of the two directors) and recently re-released in the U. S. through Koch Lorber.

This classic fairy tale by Charles Perrault (1628-1703) fascinated Jacques Demy from his early childhood, and he had aspirations of filming it even as a teenager in Nantes. In one of his first major interviews, in 1962, Demy named *Peau d'âne* as one of a handful of scripts he had in development at the time.[1] He finally got the chance to realize this dream project when, in 1969, maverick producer Mag Bodard came up with the financing, thanks largely to Catherine Deneuve's interest in starring.[2] (Bodard had produced not only Demy's best films of the 1960s, but also those of Varda, Robert Bresson, Jean-Luc Godard, and others.)

While *Peau d'âne* will strike Americans as rather offbeat, to say the least—with elements of scatological humor, implied incest, wild anachronisms, and eye-popping visual design—it is a well-known and beloved fairy tale in France. Indeed, it is probably Demy's most familiar film among French audiences, due to its enormous appeal with children and repeated television showings over the years—not to mention its wickedly tongue-in-cheek approach to the enchanted fairy-tale genre.

Under the opening credits, we see several books. The largest among them opens, introducing our tale: "Once upon a time, there lived a king. . . ." The source

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of this King's (Jean Marais) prosperity is a magic donkey, which excretes gold and jewels instead of manure. In addition to this limitless wealth, the King is blessed with a beautiful wife and daughter. Suddenly, though, the Queen (Deneuve) falls gravely ill. On her deathbed, she insists that the King promise to remarry, but only if he finds another woman as beautiful and virtuous as she. However, the only one who fits these criteria is their own daughter (also played by Deneuve). The King rashly decides that he will marry her.

Horrified, the Princess seeks advice and help from the Lilac Fairy (the deliciously devilish Delphine Seyrig), who counsels her to ask the King for several outrageous gifts—culminating with the skin of the magic donkey—as conditions of marriage. Desperate, the King reluctantly agrees, but before a wedding can take place, the Fairy helps the Princess (disguised in the horrible donkey skin) to escape to a faraway kingdom. There she assumes an alias as a lowly scullery maid called "Peau d'âne."

One day a Prince (Jacques Perrin) catches sight of the Princess and concocts a plot to make her his bride. Feigning illness, the Prince says that the only thing that will make him well is a cake made by "Peau d'âne," so his mother sends for one. In a curious scene of doubling, both Princess and scullery maid together bake a "cake d'amour," slipping a delicate gold ring into the batter. When the Prince discovers the ring, he proclaims that all eligible women in the kingdom are to come and try it on, and whoever can wear it shall be his bride. After every other maiden in the kingdom has failed, "Peau d'âne" easily slips the ring onto her finger. Her donkey-skin disguise falls away to reveal the Princess in all her radiant glory, and the two are wed.

The King (Jean Marais) admires the Princess in her sun-colored gown.

The Princess (Catherine Deneuve), wearing her moon-colored gown, consults with the Lilac Fairy (Delphine Seyrig).

Despite its veneer of traditional fairy-tale elements, *Peau d'âne* arguably fits into a quasi-Brechtian tradition that runs throughout Jacques Demy's body of work. Just a few examples from his best-known films will illustrate this tendency. Consider the all-sung dialogue and class-commentary of *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*; the shocking juxtaposition of location shooting and outrageous color design in that film and its successor, *The Young Girls of Rochefort*; and the often jarring intrusion of music in *Lola* and *Bay of Angels* (1963). Further examples abound in Demy's other films, and *Peau d'âne* offers perhaps the clearest case: the film actively and repeatedly calls attention to and questions its artificial world and even its own status as fairy tale.

Michel Legrand's music plays a significant role in this regard. Diegetic and nondiegetic distinctions are often blurred, and the style ranges from relatively "authentic" to the (unspecified) "period" to being heavily jazz-inflected. For example, the opening credits are accompanied by a baroque orchestral piece that seems appropriate for the once-upon-a-time periodicity of the fairy tale (as well as its seventeenth-century literary origins). Then the same musical theme is revamped as a jazzy vocal number a few scenes later: the Princess's performance here is pointedly undercut, as Deneuve clearly is lip-synching to a studio-recorded vocal track (performed by another singer) and miming the organ. Furthermore, the end of the song is cut short abruptly (apparently just one or two bars from the end) when the King requests that the Princess come see him at once. Although the Princess stops playing and singing (thus confounding our expectation that in musical

films, songs are played through to completion), the song is continued briefly by her pet parrot, as it mockingly sings the line, "Love has made me mad." This provides ironic commentary on the action, as the King is about to propose marriage to his daughter. The parrot makes another, equally strange appearance later, uttering the phrase "Love, love, I love you so" and cackling playfully as the Prince approaches the forest cabin of "Peau d'âne."

Like the juxtaposition of classical and jazz music, the sophisticated temporal scheme of the film brings the remote, indeterminate past of traditional fairy tales into sharp relief against the historical present of the viewing experience. Just before proposing marriage to the Princess, the King reads her some "poems of the future," from a book given to him by the Fairy. Viewers may recognize the poetry as that of Jean Cocteau (1889-1963) and Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), "poets of the future" who were also, by 1970, poets of the past. Significantly, the volume from which the King reads is taken from the same bookshelf we see in the film's opening and closing credits (on which rests the book containing the story of *Peau d'âne*). Thus Cocteau, Apollinaire, and Perrault (also a poet), as well as past, present, and future, all seem to coexist in the world of this film.

A few other scenes, by way of blatant and sometimes outrageous anachronisms, foreground the ability of the Lilac Fairy to bridge past, present, and future. Lamenting the fact that her magical powers are fading, the Fairy compares them to a battery that is running low. Confused, the Princess asks, "What is a battery?" Glibly, the Fairy waves off the question, replying simply, "Oh, nothing; I'm getting old." The Fairy also has a "Princess"-style telephone, prominently featured in the décor of her outdoor "boudoir." Similarly, in the film's most patently over-the-top gesture, the Lilac Fairy and the King enter the final scene via helicopter as they arrive to celebrate the marriage of the Prince and Princess. If the Fairy lives in a world of batteries, telephones, and helicopters, then perhaps she also lives in a world that knows about fairy tales, myth, and cinema—including the story of *Peau d'âne*.

We might even speculate that it was the Fairy who gave the King the book of *Peau d'âne* that sits alongside Cocteau and Apollinaire on his bookshelf—and that she may therefore be considered a sort of surrogate author of the tale. After all, if the King has read the books of poetry she gave him, perhaps he also has read the book of *Peau d'âne,* which may even have galvanized his plan to marry the Princess. It is almost as if the tale has *written itself* from within, which invites us to ponder the lack of historicity often attributed to myths and fairy tales as "eternal" stories created by no one. (In fact, "Peau d'âne" was put in classic verse form by Perrault in 1694, but as with his other tales, its origins are older, so the historical problem remains.) Perrault's story undergoes a few significant changes in Demy's version, and they merit attention as they further contribute to the film's program of Brechtian distancing.

Peau d'âne hides in her forest cottage.

When "Peau d'âne" sets about baking the "cake d'amour" for the Prince, suddenly and inexplicably she appears in double form: as the scullery maid dressed in the donkey skin, and as the Princess dressed in her dazzling, sun-colored gown. While "Peau d'âne" reads the recipe from a cookbook, the Princess does the work of mixing the batter and putting the cake into the oven. All the while, the "two" of them sing a duet, a song that highlights the amorous and even sexual nature of their task, with such pointed lyrics as, "to fulfill his desire, light up your oven fire," and others emphasizing the whiteness of the flour and the freshness of the eggs.[3]

Having the Princess make the cake, rather than "Peau d'âne," serves at least a dual purpose. On the one hand, it evokes the rather quaint idea that preparing a meal in a loving way makes any woman a "princess." (This notion that a woman proves herself by way of domestic tasks is characteristic of the era in which the tale originated; its irony would not have been lost on audiences in 1970.) But the odd doubling also adds a level of Brechtian criticism. We are momentarily pulled out of the story world (to the extent that we are ever really drawn into it), as we note the strangeness of the scene, an effect augmented by Legrand's song. In this ques-

tioning mode, we are presented with the anti-spectacle of the Princess doing manual work, essentially following the orders of "Peau d'âne," a scullery maid. This is the only scene where we see the two personae (Princess and servant girl) together on screen—both, of course, the same character. A critique of class distinctions (important for Brecht) is evident here, and indeed it runs throughout the film and much of Demy's work.

Another clear example lies in a second major scene that Demy invented for his film version. After finding the ring in the "cake d'amour," the Prince fantasizes about the Princess, who appears in his chamber as a half-visible, ghost-like image. Then, a phantom double of the Prince also appears and goes off with the phantom Princess. They ride together in an enchanted boat, finally arriving at an open field, where a feast has been laid out for them. Here, Demy gives us a gesture almost as perverse as the appearance of the helicopter mentioned earlier: in a shot lasting several seconds, a statue of the Devil appears quite prominently and inexplicably in the middle-ground of the frame, presiding over the ecstatic merry-making of the two lovers. This suddenly adds a dark, eerie, critical tone to a sequence that otherwise consists of excessive joy and abandon, implying that there is something evil in the notion that some people are simply born to rule and to be served, taking more from the world than they need or give back, heedless of the cares and wants of others.

During this scene, the Prince and Princess sing a love song to each other in voiceover, featuring these pointed lyrics:

> "What are we going to do with all this happiness? Could we ever bear to share it? . . .
>
> "Everything forbidden we will do . . .
>
> "Is it just a dream or is it real? . . .
>
> "We'll live happily in our fairy tale of love."

These lines suggest that the lovers deserve all their happiness (including their excessive wealth) and should not be troubled to share it—and furthermore that they do not live by the same rules as common people. As rulers, they may do as they wish, even things that are forbidden to others. Not only do the explicit references to dreams and fairy tales contribute to the film's Brechtian self-awareness *as* fairy tale, but they also suggest that the very concept of a privileged class is in fact mythical, reinforced by fanciful notions of perfect, eternal love and happiness (and, we might note, often perpetuated in the cinema). Indeed it does seem that in our own world, "common people" continue to embrace the idea of "royalty" partly because it taps into such attractive fantasies. The abrupt and prominent appearance of the Devil points out the problematic aspects of such tempting fancy.

This criticism of class distinction and immense wealth recurs elsewhere in the mise-en-scène, chiefly in the locations of the castles. By this point in his career, Demy had solidified his practice of using real locations but having his production designer (usually Bernard Evein) transform them to resemble highly stylized sets (as in *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*). With *Peau d'âne,* however, Jean-Pierre Berthomé suggests that Demy's strategy does not work very well, as the real, "larger-than-life" locations of the castles seem "too vast" for the life-sized actors who populate them.[4] A lower-than-expected budget led Demy to use a less experienced production designer and may have forced him to use locations rather than more expensive, fabricated sets in a studio. Still, what Berthomé describes as halls "dressed by a tasteful decorator, rather than transformed by a true designer" arguably contribute to the Brechtian distancing techniques already mentioned. Ironically, the locations do not seem "real," and the artifice of the set decoration is evident at every turn. Furthermore, the idea that the immense halls of the castles are "too vast" for their inhabitants fits perfectly with other Brechtian elements, calling into question the validity of class privilege. Indeed, these real castles *are* too big for "mere mortals" (which is after all what royals and all rulers are, despite some fantasies to the contrary).

Clearly, some of these ideas reside in Perrault's version of "Peau d'âne" and can be found in his more famous "Cinderella" as well. In each story, the heroine undergoes multiple transformations (overseen by a "fairy godmother"), her station in life ranging from lowly servant girl to princess. Just as Cinderella's glass slipper will fit only her foot, the ring in *Peau d'âne* will fit only one finger, implying some inherently "royal" quality in each character. This double-edged plot device suggests on the one hand that royalty is divinely ordained, but on the other hand, that even a humble servant girl may have the qualities of a princess and therefore should be treated with respect. While the seeds of such class criticism exist in Perrault's stories, Demy brings them to full flower in his film version of *Peau d'âne.* In yet another example of Demy's amplification of the tale, all the maidens of the kingdom who come to try on the ring are placed in order of class status: "The princesses first, then the duchesses. And after the duchesses, the . . . the countesses." This hierarchy extends even down to the servant girls: "The servants and the chambermaids before the cooks . . . the

The Prince (Jacques Perrin) slips the ring onto Peau d'âne's finger.

dishwashers last."[5] Ironically, the *very last* to be called is "Peau d'âne," the only one whom the ring fits, and who transforms instantly back into the Princess.

In addition to its Brechtian tactics, *Peau d'âne* offers perhaps the most complete example among all of Demy's films of an homage to a cinematic master, namely Jean Cocteau. The casting of Jean Marais in a fairy tale immediately calls to mind his double (really triple) roles in Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast* (1946), which are paralleled by Deneuve's double/triple roles here; and several elements of the mise-en-scène directly recall that film as well. Notably, both Cocteau and Demy use live human figures (more as models than actors) to portray enchanted statuary in the castles; and as Berthomé suggests, the all-blue and all-red servants in *Peau d'âne,* with their fixed, stony expressions, further recall Cocteau's *sculpture vivante.* We have already noted the quotation of Cocteau's poetry, which the King reads to the Princess while attempting to woo her, and Demy further "quotes" Cocteau in his use of rather simple yet astonishingly poetic special effects, especially slow-motion and reverse-motion. For instance, after the Fairy tells the Princess to ask for the skin of the donkey, she exits through a stained-glass window in the ceiling, "falling up" through it in a direct visual rhyme with the gorgeous reverse-slow-motion shot at the end of *Beauty and the Beast,* in which the two lovers leap upwards and fly away through the clouds. Such intertextuality is a hallmark of the New Wave, and Demy continued the practice throughout his career (for example, he would later dedicate his 1983 film, *Parking*—a riff on *Orphée*—to Cocteau's memory).

Another great filmmaker, Stanley Kubrick, once said of the varying critical response to his films, ". . . everybody's always expecting the last movie again, and they're sometimes angry—I mean some critics—often put off because they're expecting something else."[6] The films of Jacques Demy face the same peril: audiences and critics who expect *Peau d'âne* to be *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* or *The Young Girls of Rochefort* all over again will surely be disappointed and confused. Like Kubrick, Demy never made the same film twice, and even those that bear a certain degree of surface-level resemblance (*Umbrellas* and *Young Girls* for example) are ultimately quite different in tone, structure, and theme.[7] *Peau d'âne* is nothing if not unique and surprising, its maker nothing if not playful and imaginative. Audiences who love the cinema and who approach the film with a sense of openness, adventure, and discovery will find in it treasures that far surpass those offered up by the eponymous "magic donkey." The same could be said of most of Demy's films; and we can only hope that further restorations, re-releases, and rediscoveries will follow.

NOTES

1. Jacques Demy, interview with Bernard Sampre, *Cinéma 62,* no. 66 (May 1962): 46-51.
2. Jean-Pierre Berthomé, *Jacques Demy et les racines du rêve*, 2nd ed. (Nantes, France: L'Atalante, 1996), 239.
3. Demy, *Peau d'âne* screenplay, 1970. Unpublished English dialogue translation courtesy of Ciné-Tamaris.
4. Berthomé, 244.
5. Demy, *Peau d'âne* screenplay.
6. Stanley Kubrick, interview with Francis Clines, *The New York Times* (21 June 1987). Reprinted in *Stanley Kubrick: Interviews,* ed. Gene D. Phillips (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2001).
7. While any comparison between Kubrick and Demy might seem perverse, they share more than initially meets the eye: both were consummate auteurs who favored genre films; both were highly influenced by the cinema of Max Ophüls; and both created cinematic worlds more rooted in the fantastic than in any traditional sense of realism.

RODNEY HILL is a Marion L. Brittain fellow in Georgia Tech's School of Literature, Communication, and Culture. He has written extensively on Stanley Kubrick and is completing his doctoral dissertation (University of Kansas) on the films of Jacques Demy.

ABSTRACT Jacques Demy's *Donkey Skin* (1970) may seem rather offbeat, to say the least, with its elements of scatological humor, implied incest, and wild anachronisms. Still, the film's eye-popping visual design, Brechtian reflexivity, and wickedly tongue-in-cheek approach to the enchanted fairy-tale genre will delight cinephilic audiences in search of a unique and surprising viewing experience.

FILM REVIEWS

Nobody Knows (Dare mo shiranai)

Director/writer/editor: Hirokazu Kore-eda. Cinematographer: Yutaka Yamazaki. IFC Films.

Small children smuggled into an apartment in suitcases. Four children, between the ages of four and twelve, each with a different (indifferent) father. A mother who is sometimes there, more often gone, and then finally gone forever with the new "love of her life"—a man who surely doesn't know these children exist.

In most films that have children as characters (*Cinema Paradiso, E.T., The Chorus*), the child's world is filtered through an adult's perspective. With *Nobody Knows* (2004), by Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda (*Maborosi* [1995], *After Life* [1998]), there are few adults of note—a playful mother living in a permanent state of illusion, a few sympathetic convenience-store clerks, a high-school baseball coach, a landlord couple, and a bevy of fathers. But none of them appears on screen for long or plays more than a temporary, fleeting role.

Based on an actual story Kore-eda read in a newspaper article, the film introduces us to four siblings —two girls (ten-year-old Kyoko [Ayu Kitaura] and four-year-old Yuki [Momoko Shimizu]), and two boys (twelve-year-old Akira [Yuya Yagira] and seven-year-old Shigeru [Hiei Kimura])—each of whom has a different father. The children are left to fend for themselves in a small Tokyo apartment when their mother (Keiko Fukushima, played by a TV personality known simply as "You") disappears with a new man. Akira then takes over the running of the household in the absence of any adult figure. Left to their own devices, the children play in construction sites and convenience stores, while attempting to hide from the view of the landlords and welfare officials. (Later, Akira confides to one sympathetic adult that, in an earlier living situation, they had been split up by welfare officials and it was "terrible.")

As harrowing as the situation filmed by Kore-eda becomes, the actual story is even more shocking. The 1988 "Affair of the Four Abandoned Children of Nishi-Sugamo" (*Nishi-sugamo kodomo okizari jiken*) found four children, of different fathers, living on their own for six months after their mother had left the scene. There was also a fifth child, a baby whose decomposing body was found in the Nishi-sugamo apartment, and the fourth child was discovered dead in the mountains, a crime blamed on the oldest boy. According to closed-door court records, the eldest boy—upon seeing his mother again in court—cried and apologized to her that he could not take care of his siblings as she had expected. Reading newspaper statements from the actual trial involving the Nishi-sugamo children, Kore-eda sensed that there was something that took place in that

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On the whirligig: Hiei Kimura as Shigeru

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apartment that demonstrated the richness of a child's sense of compassion and ingenuity: "I intended to express that with words other than 'hell.'"[1]

Kore-eda's original screenplay (whose first draft, entitled "Wonderful Sunday," was written over 15 years ago) takes place across four seasons and—following what really happened—was filmed during the autumn and winter; then the director had to wait until spring and summer vacations to complete the filming with his student-actors.[2] Before filming the summer sequences, the director asked the children to draw pictures of the apartment as they remembered it—the verandah, *genkan* (area inside the door), walls. This helped him develop the plot for the summer episodes, and also helped him recall the space as the children had perceived it.

Kore-eda decided not to give the children any specific dialogue to learn; rather, he whispered each line to them just before filming a scene. He also did not tell them in advance how the story would develop. (His working process was to edit one season's section, and then—based on the edit—revise his writing for the next season's section.) By not giving his first-time child actors set lines to memorize, he hoped to create an atmosphere in which going to film was like going to play. Nevertheless, he noted how the main actor, Yuya Yagira, matured over the course of a year just like his character. (Kore-eda was at first somewhat surprised when Yagira, a child who had been instructed *not* to act, but only to respond, won the award for Best Actor at the Cannes Film Festival—the first Japanese and the youngest person ever to do so.)

To be "seen but not heard" has been the fate of generations of children. However, a handful of films have given those unseen and unheard children a voice. In making *Nobody Knows,* Kore-eda claimed influence from films like Truffaut's *400 Blows* (1959)—the freeze frame at the end of *Nobody Knows* surely calls to mind the ending of the Truffaut film—and the 1969 British film *Kes,* by Kenneth Loach. But to listen to childhood is not always to listen for what one expects to hear, or even for what one wants to hear. Kore-eda is rigorous in his willingness to listen to childhood's silence, to the silence that surrounds the flood of words and the flurry of everyday actions. Listening to childhood includes listening to what remains unsaid.

The basic setting in *Nobody Knows* reflects the space of the actual incident reported in the newspaper. The oldest son can move around the neighborhood freely, but the other three children are confined to the apartment because the landlords are not aware of their existence. (In an opening scene, the landlords tell the mother and Akira that the neighbors wouldn't want "noisy little children" around.) Kyoko, Shigeru, and Yuki watch from a window as other children play outside. Yuki, the youngest one, seems oblivious at first to

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Alone together:
Ayu Kitaura as Kyoko and
Momoko Shimizu as Yuki

the chaos around her, but her drawing of a girl with long curly hair is later revealed to be her rendition of the absent mother. When Akira takes Yuki out of the apartment for her birthday (and indulgently lets her wear her favorite "squeaky" sandals, despite the noise), she recites the names of the stores and objects she passes as if they were magical incantations. Little Shigeru, the most clownish child, invents excuses to venture further and further out onto the apartment's narrow verandah.

Akira does not choose his new responsibility. "Commissioned" by his mother to serve as the leader of a mismatched group of half-siblings, he rises to his appointed role out of necessity.[3] He is the only one who confronts the errant mother, albeit briefly, to find out if she has truly told her new lover about her four children. He knows the answer before she even offers an evasive reply. At one point, enraged at her lengthy absence, he pulls all her remaining clothes out of the closet to sell.

As funds disappear, Akira tracks down the different fathers he can find—a cab driver, a lackey in a Pachinko parlor. He senses their worthlessness, yet hopes against hope in his desperate attempt to hold the family together. All he gets for his efforts is a meal, small change, and vulgar talk about his mother. In an interview, Kore-eda offers no excuses for the fathers, but is more charitable in his thoughts toward the mother ("She was the victim of her particular circumstance and maybe she loved her children in her own way"[4]).

Akira is accused of shoplifting at the 7-11 store where he frequently stands and reads *manga* (comic books) for free. Only the sharp eyes of a young clerk notice that other boys put the stolen goods in Akira's bag ("nobody knows" does not *always* equal "nobody cares"). When another clerk becomes aware of Akira's increasingly frantic efforts to keep the family together, he saves leftovers from the store's food counter for him. Akira waits at the back of the store with his blue bucket to receive the handouts. (This is the same bucket the children use to wash out their clothes in the neighborhood park once their water is shut off.)

At one point, the mother returns briefly with small gifts for each child. She paints ten-year-old Kyoko's fingernails, but then berates her when the girl inadvertently spills the bottle of polish. A few days later, the only trace of the mother is that stain on the floor.

For children in such an extreme situation, happiness resides in small things—the smell of fresh *tatami* mats upon moving into the new apartment, seeds gathered from a discarded plant that germinate in empty ramen cups and grow on the verandah. One of the plants falls off the ledge, foreshadowing more serious accidents to follow. The passage of time is marked by small changes—the deepening of Akira's voice, the switch from frozen hands in winter to skin streaked with sweat in summer. As resources become more and more stretched, the children use whatever they can find for drawing paper, including the overdue gas bill.

In one ecstatic sequence, all four children venture out surreptitiously as a group. The camera revolves around them as they play on the whirligig in the public park near their apartment. This is not the exuberant rebelliousness found in Jean Vigo's *Zero for Conduct* (*Zéro de conduite* [1933]), though it shares with the French film the sheer joy of movement after being cooped up for a long time. It also calls to mind the scene in *400 Blows* when the "unruly child" Antoine joyously spins around on the large wooden cylindrical drum ("The Roter") in an amusement center. Akira practices baseball by himself in the park, using a fallen branch for a bat, and later is invited by a high-school baseball coach to fill in for an absent player. Standing behind the boy and guiding his hand on the bat, the coach offers a moment of connection between the young boy and an adult.

In the background of all of Hirokazu Kore-eda's films hovers the slow revelation of inner depths, often circling around an inexplicable loss—the suicide of a young husband (*Maborosi*); the death of family members who belonged to a murderous cult (*Distance* [2001]); the inevitable fading of memory (*After Life*); Kore-eda's documentaries, shot with his distinctive style of objective camerawork and subjective presence, cover a wide range of topics—from AIDS in Japan (*August Without Him* [*Kare no inai hachigatsu,* 1993]) to the plight of a Korean trying to pass as Japanese (*I Wanted to Be a Japanese* [*Nihonjin ni naritakatta,* 1992]) to a group of rural schoolchildren with a unique classroom project (*Lessons from a Calf—The Education of One Class at Ina Elementary School* [*Mo hitotsu no kyoiku,* 1991]). One of his most powerful documentaries, *Without Memory* (*Kioku ga ushinawareta toki* [1966]), opens a window onto the personal hell of a young man suffering from a rare kind of short-term memory loss.

In their introduction to *Trauma and Cinema,* E. Ann Kaplan and Ban Wang outline four main positions for viewers of films about traumatic situations. The one that seems most appropriate for viewers of all of Kore-eda's films is the fourth, that of a witness, a triangular structure involving the horror, the victim, and the listener/viewer.[5] (This is also the only viewing

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Maborosi: Playing on the beach—"a little danger"

position Kaplan and Wang identify with the possibility of feelings of compassion.) All Kore-eda's feature films, and many of his documentaries, are about a compassionate listening to people who live "betwixt and between," but he is more interested in depicting survivors than victims. Within seemingly straightforward stories, he unearths insights into human resilience. In *Nobody Knows,* he took a sensational news story and imagined its depths.

A scene in Kore-eda's first feature film, *Maborosi,* foreshadows his portrayal of children in *Nobody Knows.* In that earlier scene, the protagonist Yumiko's son and new step-daughter explore the beach of Sosogi, on the rough Japan Sea coast. The small children play among some dead branches and discarded boats; then they run through a dark tunnel. Kore-eda comments:

> Some people just say the children are adorable. Others say it's a beautiful scene, and this is all fine. But what I intended was for people to feel a little danger in that scene—to smell a bit of death.[6]

The precarious situation of *Nobody Knows* is bound to head toward disaster. The apartment that at first seemed crowded but workable becomes more and more run-down. Akira's visiting "friends" (tough kids who take advantage of his loneliness) mumble about the stench of garbage. Tempers flare as the temperature outside rises. In this day-to-day existence, the children are truly alone in the apartment; like "beings on a raft lost in the immensity of the world."[7] As the situation in the apartment deteriorates, Kore-eda decenters more and more of the shots, stressing the children's vulnerability. And yet an odd balance is restored each time through Akira's small but heroic efforts. It is only at the most tragic moments, when death strikes the precarious family, that an open framing leaves the children without any defining structures around them, truly vulnerable to the elements and to the city (shown as a dizzying array of lights). At the grimmest moments, Kore-eda adjusts the lighting so that it is either blindingly bright (and matched by a shaky hand-held camera) or grotesquely shadowed. The effect is eerie and profoundly moving.

So many questions remain about the children of *Nobody Knows*—never having attended school, never having spent time with their fathers, not even properly registered at birth: What thoughts do they wake up to each morning? What do they do all day in their narrow confine? How do they mark the passing of their days? When Kyoko quietly implores her mother to send her to school, the mother (in a rare moment of realistic reflection) reminds her that "kids at school make fun of kids without dads." The freeze frame at the end of the film of four children walking away from the camera refuses to offer any tidy ending to this engrossing tale, yet it also does not close off the possibility of change.

When pressed to state what his film might accomplish, Kore-eda ventures that he hopes it will inspire people to pay more attention to the children around them. As one reviewer noted in dismay: "Even when the rent goes unpaid and they are left without electricity and water, [the children] still fail to register on the radar of anyone's concern."[8] While I agree with the many reviewers who consider the film to be a validation of the children themselves rather than a condemnation of the mother or society at large, I feel sure that there is a subtle, but insistent, anger at work here. After all, Kore-eda does not title the film "Four Abandoned Children," but rather, "Nobody Knows." Of course the title refers to the fact that nobody knew the children were living in the apartment, yet might it not also remind us that nobody knew what really was going on inside those children? Children cannot grow without some degree of psychological safety; when sheer survival is a child's constant struggle, nobody knows where such a childhood disappears.

One might be tempted to see the film as a sociological statement documenting the movement from a traditional philosophy of *kodakara* (literally "child treasure") to the current rise in reported cases of child neglect and abuse in contemporary Japan. The so-called *kyoiku mama* (literally "education mama") of postwar Japan, whose whole existence is focused on getting her child into the best university, and the legend

of the perfectly behaved Japanese student have increasingly been nudged out of the spotlight by news articles about broken families and sadistic bullying in school. Stories of parental abuse and neglect appear in Japanese newspapers with painful frequency. This rise in reported incidents of parental abuse has been attributed to many factors: the foregrounding of consumer culture and a concomitant need for instant gratification; the reliance on *konbini* (convenience stores) by *tenuki okusan* (literally, "hands-off" wives) without the time or energy for traditional elaborate cooking; the growing sense that the schools have become verbal and physical battlegrounds, and so on. While Japan does not suffer from the inadequate health insurance and wild fluctuations in funding for public education found in the U.S., it *is* undergoing what sociologist Merry White has aptly termed "an era of upheaval."[9]

While inspired in part by those kinds of sociopolitical problems, *Nobody Knows* subtly reminds us that children are compelling individuals. The director stresses what these children have, not what they lack. In fact, we measure our own lives not by our greater prosperity and stability, but by how enriched we have become in sharing the children's resolve and hope for the future—what the director refers to as their two main qualities: *takumashisa* (sturdiness, resoluteness) and *kowareyasusa* (vulnerability, literally "being easily broken"). As Japanese film scholar Aaron Gerow perceptively observes: "In the distance between our world and that of these children, we realize we have come out on the wrong end of Kore-eda's profoundly detailed exploration of reality in cinema."[10]

To those on the outside, unaware of the sacrifices involved, the four children in *Nobody Knows* appear dirty, unkempt, oddly silent. Kore-eda opens another door onto their world. Recognizing their ingenuity, their profound desire for "normal life," we are shocked at the outside world's limited perspective. Kore-eda focuses on the children's fundamental goodness. In one scene, the increasingly withdrawn Kyoko—aware that they are out of funds—quietly gives Akira the money she was saving to buy a real piano, her one dream. The director makes space for the children's sense of ceremony. This calls to mind another great film told primarily from a child's point-of-view: René Clément's *Forbidden Games* (*Jeux interdits* [1952]). André Bazin noted that Clément did not judge the two children, Michel and Paulette, as they struggled to make sense of life in wartime France through their elaborate burial procedures for pets and other small animals.[11] Kore-eda also does not play the role of the moralist or the teacher; rather he takes on the role of novelist of the children's lives. We are amazed at the children's sense of ritual in the face of death, especially in the case of children who are themselves living on the edge.

From its inception, the cinema has been quick to depict the sentimentalized child, the violent child, the feral child, the child genius. Less frequently do we see a child's simple magnanimity—often expressed as nothing more than a telling gesture. Recall, for example, the reassuring way little Bruno slips his hand into the hand of his humiliated father (*Bicycle Thieves* [*Ladri di biciclette,* Vittorio de Sica, 1948]), or how Scout gracefully escorts a painfully withdrawn Boo Radley back to his house after he has saved the children's lives (*To Kill a Mockingbird* [Robert Mulligan, 1962]). In Kohei Oguri's *Muddy River (Doro no kawa,* 1981), the child of a noodle-shop owner reaches out his hand to the children of a prostitute who travels from town to town on a houseboat, transcending adult stigmas to become fast friends for a while. On the other hand, the plight of the children in Kore-eda's film can be contrasted with recent films that stress the partnering of a troubled child with a mentor-adult (films like *Monsieur Ibrahim, Le Papillon, Central Station*)—a narrative pattern that can be traced back to films like Chaplin's *The Kid* (1921) and which is ultimately more reassuring than what we find in *Nobody Knows*. The same child and mentor-adult pattern can also be found in Japanese films like Shimizu Hiroshi's *Children of the Beehive (Hachinosu no kodomotachi* [1948]), in which the strong urge for renewal in an impoverished postwar Japan is exemplified by a group of war orphans who band together with a repatriated soldier in the countryside. This unlikely group survives the difficult postwar period by their wits and by sticking together. The absence of this kind of significant mentor-adult in *Nobody Knows* is indicative of an ominous trend in our large cities: we neither see nor hear the most marginalized among us.

Against the enormous tragedies in the world arena, the plight of four small children abandoned by their mother and fathers might seem inconsequential. But from this microcosm of precarious sanity, we are in a better position to understand the simple moments of happiness—and the deep anxieties—of our times. Kore-eda reminds us of the richness of inner landscapes of childhood through his discreet but forceful use of close-ups: a child's hand counting out the remaining coins as it pastes receipts carefully into a notebook (real-life math lessons). A red toy piano with one leg broken. Shoes—and a growing adolescent's dangling feet. A friend clutching the hand of a distraught

child, almost a man. A hand shaking with cold and fear.

What are we to take away from this film? Sadness, surely. An incipient and growing rage. From his first film about a group of elementary school children who learn how to keep a calf alive to this most recent one about the efforts of a group of children to keep themselves alive, Kore-eda never averts his eye, or his heart, from the remarkably human dimension of a story. At the close of *Nobody Knows,* we still have to ask ourselves who this "nobody" in the title truly is. What great absence allows four children to be so alone and so unnoticed in the midst of one of the world's great cities? What part of this "nobody" includes us as well? How many other children have been left behind?

NOTES

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1. Mami Tsukahara, "Kore-eda: A man of humanity and imagination," *Daily Yomiuri* online, Arts weekend section (8 August 2004). www.yomiuri.co.jp. One of the sisters is said to have told welfare officials: "*Oni-chan* (older brother) was kind to us. He gave us more food than mom."
2. Originally Kore-eda considered structuring the film as a kind of false picture diary narrated exclusively from Akira's point of view, with a fantasy ending in which all the members of the family (including fathers) are reunited one Sunday. As the director himself surpassed the age of the mother in the film (40), both the title and the focus of the story changed (*Dare mo shiranai* booklet [2004], 41, 44).
3. The story of the oldest son has haunted the director's thoughts since he first read about the case. Here was a child who had stayed with his family when all others had run away. Kore-eda made the film as his only way of telling the boy, "*Yoku gambatta ne*!" ("You tried hard, you did well" [*Dare mo shiranai* booklet, 41]).
4. Kuriko Sato, "Hirokazu Kore-eda," *Midnight Eye* online interview, 28 June 2004. www.midnighteye.com.
5. E. Ann Kaplan and Ban Wang, "From Traumatic Paralysis to the Force Field of Modernity," in *Trauma and Cinema*: *Cross-Cultural Explorations,* ed. E. Ann Kaplan and Ban Wang (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 10. The other three viewing positions they define are trauma films that end with a comforting "cure"; the audience as vicariously traumatized; and the viewer as voyeur.
6. Milestone Film and Video guide to *Maborosi*, 8.
7. Marie-Noëlle Tranchant, "Des enfants oubliés: En competition, *Nobody Knows,* de Kore-eda Hirokazu," in *Le Figaro (*14 May 2004): 25.
8. Allan Hunter, "*Nobody Knows,*" *Screen International* (14 May 2004).
9. Merry Isaacs White, *Perfectly Japanese: Making Families in an Era of Upheaval* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).
10. Aaron Gerow, "The Breakdown of a Tiny, Insular World," special to *The Daily Yomiur*i (5 August 2004). www.yomiuri.co.jp.
11. André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1958-1962), 15-21. Translated in *Literature/Film Quarterly,* vol. 30, no. 1 (2002): 4.

LINDA C. EHRLICH is an associate professor at Case Western University. Her most recent book is *An Open Window,* on Victor Erice (Scarecrow Press, 2000); she also co-edited, with David Desser, *Cinematic Landscapes* (University of Texas Press, 1994).

ABSTRACT The award-winning *Nobody Knows (Dare mo shiranai,* 2004), by Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda, is reviewed, with reference to theories of trauma and to other films featuring child protagonists. *Nobody Knows* is based on a true story of four half-siblings who must fend for themselves in a small apartment in Tokyo when their mother deserts them.

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The Ninth Day

Director: Volker Schlöndorff. Producer: Jürgen Haase. Writers: Eberhard Görner, Andreas Pflüger. Cinematographer: Tomas Erhart. Music: Alfred Schnittke. Kino International.

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The priest Henri Kremer (Ulrich Matthes) and his nemesis, Friedrich Gebhardt (August Diehl)

Although his 2000 release *The Legend of Rita* was heralded as a return to form for New German Cinema figure Volker Schlöndorff after the critical and box-office failures of *The Ogre* (1996) and *Palmetto* (1998), the filmmaker nonetheless had to wait four years for completion and release of his latest feature, *The Ninth Day* (2004). At first glance, the film seems to pull Schlöndorff back to familiar territory: an examination of the Nazi past through the creation of a morally anguished central character. As with *The Ogre* and *The Legend of Rita,* Schlöndorff again commits himself to treating a facet of the recent history of Central Europe. Of the three movies, *The Ninth Day* is by far the most modest in format, and seems almost a throwback to the filmmaker's small-scale work of the early 1970s, such as *The Sudden Wealth of the Poor People of Kombach* (1970) and *A Free Woman* (1972). Surprisingly new for the director is the treatment of overtly religious subject matter.[1] Although religious motifs were used throughout *The Ogre,* never before has Schlöndorff so directly confronted issues of religious belief and faith-centered morality. Indeed, *The Ninth Day*'s portrayal of a Catholic priest struggling to choose the right moral path indeed seems like the work of a committed believer.

For *The Ninth Day,* Schlöndorff and his screenwriters have given the published concentration camp recollections of Abbé Jean Bernard a distinctly cinematic structure. The movie is an homage to Jean-Pierre Melville and Carl Theodor Dreyer, and a study of survivor guilt expressed through motifs involving the sharing of food and water. In contrasting the main character, the priest Henri Kremer (Ulrich Matthes), to his nemesis, the former seminarian Friedrich Gebhardt (August Diehl), we see Schlöndorff extending the discourse on National Socialism that he began in *Young Törless* (1966) and continued through *The Tin Drum* (1979) and *The Ogre.* Viewed in the context of other recent motion pictures that seek to come to terms with the Nazi past, especially Costa-Gavras's *Amen* (2002), *The Ninth Day* embodies a unique approach to realizing abstract concepts about politics and morality through the use of concrete images. The film also marks the first time the filmmaker has directly portrayed the concentration camps.

The Ninth Day is nominally an adaptation of a slender volume by Bernard, a Luxembourgian priest who was imprisoned at the Dachau concentration camp from May 19, 1941, through August 5, 1942.[2] Schlöndorff's movie focuses on a ten-day period that takes up fewer than half a dozen pages in the text, giving temporal unity to an earlier narrative that was composed largely of brief impressions and remembrances. For reasons that were never quite clear even to him, Bernard had been given a ten-day "vacation" from Dachau and was allowed to return to his native Luxembourg.[3] Schlöndorff's Bernard figure, the Abbé Kremer, faces a series of moral and ethical decisions during this ten-day leave, and the director uses repeated flashbacks to fill in the broader context. Bernard called his book *Pfarrerblock 25487. Ein Bericht,* which translates loosely as "Inmate 25487 of the Pastors' Cell Block: An Account." The text was first published in 1945 in the belletristic section of the *Luxembourger Wort* newspaper, and was reissued in book form in Munich in 1962. Schlöndorff's title, by contrast, emphasizes not the place, but rather the time frame of the movie's major action. Schlöndorff and his scriptwriters employ a structure which is an inversion of that used in his 1981 *Circle of Deceit,* where his hero Georg Laschen leaves a comfortable home in Germany to find a new home in war-torn Beirut, only to return at the end. Kremer does the opposite, leaving a prison camp to return temporarily home.

AN ASCETIC HERO

On his journey, Kremer—a solitary figure in a threatening world—resembles some of the heroes created by Schlöndorff's mentor, Melville. In *Le Samourai* (1967), Alain Delon, in the underworld uniform of trench coat and fedora hat, is a lone gangster who adheres to his own strict code of ethics and loyalty in dealing with companions, rival gangsters, and the police. Although some details may change—a cassock and the round-crowned, broad-brimmed, "Eierkocher" (literally, "egg-cooker) hat instead of the dark suit and skinny tie—

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Schlöndorff creates a comparable male-centered world in which a stern-faced stoical hero abides by his principles. In its pared-down austerity, its repression of affect, and its celebration of moral toughness, *The Ninth Day* is Schlöndorff's most Melville-like movie since *Coup de grâce* (1976). It reflects Schlöndorff's observation that what he learned most from Melville was to do things as simply as possible.[4]

The director himself, however, has cited as an influence not Melville but Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928).[5] He notes a narrative similarity in that both movies enact the internal struggle of a heroic figure who is directly tempted to abandon intense spiritual convictions. *The Ninth Day* is probably most memorable visually for its powerful close-ups of actor Ulrich Matthes, whose face, like Maria Falconetti's, becomes emblematic of a whole array of emotions. With his gaunt, bony cheeks, dark eyebrows, and piercing eyes, Matthes evokes the figures of Francis Bacon and Egon Schiele. He has an Expressionist intensity in both his face and his thin, elongated, black-clad body, inviting comparison with Conrad Veidt's Cesare in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1920). At the same time, Matthes's performance is interiorized, and for the most part it excludes overt emotionalism. It is the face of someone suffering prolonged, intense pain without complaint. At times, he becomes a clear Christ figure, as when his sister (Bibiana Beglau) washes his swollen, scabbed feet.

CHRIST FIGURES AND TEMPTATION

The movie opens with powerful Golgotha-like images portraying life in the priests' cellblock of Dachau. Schlöndorff himself has stated that what made him overcome his previous hesitancy to portray the camps on screen was the precision of Jean Bernard's descriptions.[6] The most memorable images of the movie's opening come from a mock crucifixion in which an inmate is suspended from a cross—a poetic expansion of Bernard's account of how prisoners were hung from their arms as a means of torture. In a similar vision of prison abuse, we see a Nazi repeatedly strike an inmate on the head with a metal poker. These images are particularly compelling because of the powerful austerity with which they are shot and edited. Although Schlöndorff claims he would like to have shot the movie in black and white, his use of a desaturated color palette, harsh lighting, and chaotic movement gives the images a blunt force.[7] The moments of externalized pain and suffering set up a context for the internalized pain that follows. Kremer, allowed to return to Luxembourg on leave from the camp, must carry these images of degradation with him.

The Ninth Day thus becomes a study of survivor guilt. Kremer must figure out why he has been privileged to receive a break from his imprisonment and, at least temporarily, to see his family again. He becomes tempted in two contradictory directions. Gebhardt enthusiastically encourages Kremer to help in forging a Catholic collaboration with the German occupiers: he can thereby save his colleagues who remain in Dachau. A counter-temptation comes from his brother (Germain Wagner) and sister, who offer to help him flee to Paris or Switzerland, although his colleagues — and maybe also his siblings—would probably be executed in reprisal.

Kremer becomes a strong character for identification because of his victimization, but also because of the guilt he feels for evading, even temporarily, the suffering experienced by his peers. By definition, any audience for a concentration camp film is an audience of vicarious survivors. This privileged position carries with it a burden of guilt. By structuring the movie around Kremer's "vacation," Schlöndorff encapsulates the phenomenon of survivor guilt in a discrete narrative structure.

Kremer's choices emerge in a series of conversations. They occur between him and his family members; Gebhardt; a Nazi-sympathizing vicar general, second in command to the bishop (Götz Burger); and, finally, the Bishop of Luxembourg himself (Hilmar Thate), who has been passively resistant to the Nazi occupiers. Schlöndorff sets himself up here for what may be *The Ninth Day*'s greatest weakness. Although they are thematically compelling, these talky encounters in offices, homes, and church sacristies do not have the same visual force as the concentration camp scenes. Yet in their creation of a comfortable, affluent, so-called normal world they can still resonate with the memory of the hell that Kremer so recently experienced.

FAMILIES, FOOD, AND WATER

The movie sets up two families for comparison and uses a motif of food-sharing to lend this comparison metaphorical depth. There is Kremer's biological family, which is composed of his brother, his pregnant sister, and her husband. In contrast to this family is the family of priests Kremer has left behind at the camp. The episode in which the priests celebrate Mass in their stark surroundings introduces the motif of food-sharing that continues throughout the movie. Sharing food is associated with being at home. When Kremer takes one of the early meals with his siblings, however, he finds he is unable to eat with them. To the astonishment of the family, he leaves the meal with the

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Passive resistance: the Bishop of Luxembourg (Hilmar Thate)

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Gebhardt: shake hands with the devil?

remainder of the loaf of bread in his hands. The audience is left to infer the guilt he must feel. This discomfort at being at home is further emphasized in a later scene in which Kremer, apparently uncomfortable sleeping in a bed, rolls up some clothing to make a pillow and moves to the floor.

In an early scene that shows the camp celebration of Mass, the priests are breaking bread while singing a secular song intended to conceal what they are really doing from the guards. But the guards interrupt anyway, and disrupt the service. In a later scene, the Nazis mock the Mass by pouring wine for the fathers and making them drink it down in one gulp. Each incident creates a kind of blasphemed Last Supper. A comparable image of sharing arises in the scene on the train as Kremer is traveling to Luxembourg. A father sitting opposite gives his child a sandwich. The child offers Kremer half. He accepts silently, a gesture that quietly suggests what must be his overpowering hunger. Kremer then symbolically returns the favor when he accepts a chocolate from a box of candy that Gebhardt offers him, only to present it to a little girl on the street outside the Gestapo headquarters.

At the end of the film, in an incident taken directly from Bernard, Kremer returns to the camp with two additional possessions: a package of cigarettes and a sausage. Bribing the guard with the cigarettes, he then divides the sausage for all of his colleagues. There may be here an ironic play on the words "This is My body" used in the Catholic Mass: the guards in the camp have repeatedly called the priests "Schweinepriester" and "Lagerschwein" ("pig priest" and "camp pig," respectively). As an increasing number of inmates crowd around, we realize that Kremer's sausage is much too small. But *The Ninth Day*'s closing image evokes Christ's multiplication of the loaves and fishes as a symbolic indication of the power of faith. The long shot that closes the film, with Kremer distributing food to all of his comrade priests, sugggests that somehow the small piece of sausage will spiritually satisfy them all.

The film's central leitmotif of water contrasts with these images of generosity. At the beginning of *The Ninth Day,* as we see Kremer leave the train and enter Dachau, a passenger bends down to a bucket to take a drink. Kremer tries to do the same, but a guard kicks the bucket from under his nose. Directly thereafter, we see scenes of inmates engaged in grueling work. A laborer, who will later be identified as a Norwegian priest and professor (Petr Jans), pours some water for himself into a tin can and, seeing a thirsty Kremer, passes the makeshift cup to him through a metal fence.

These scenes prefigure an incident involving Kremer and the professor that becomes a central source of the priest's spiritual torment. In the one place where *The Ninth Day* presents Kremer's interior feelings through voiceover, we hear on the soundtrack the text of a letter he writes to his recently deceased mother. In it, he describes his intense thirst while working during the hot summer, and relates an incident in which he finds a tiny leak in an old water pipe. In a particularly vivid flashback, we observe Kremer frantically catching drops of water in his mouth. But we also see that he has deliberately not called to the professor, claiming the few drops of water from the pipe for himself rather than sharing them as the other had done. When the professor later breaks under pressure and intentionally runs into an electrified fence, Kremer blames his selfishness about the water for contributing to the Norwegian's despair. "I am a common, miserable criminal," he writes to his mother. This image of the water pipe haunts Kremer during his stay in Luxembourg, and stands in contrast to the wastefulness of the scenes involving wine. This motif of water expands in a scene on the sixth day in which Kremer collapses from weakness in Gebhardt's office. Gebhardt pours him a glass of water and places it next to him, but Kremer pointedly leaves it untouched, refusing to join the Nazi family.

FASCIST JUDASES AND PAPAL VILLAINS

These emphases on Kremer's human weakness help to establish his vulnerability to the temptations offered him by Gebhardt, who is made to seem both evil and sympathetic. Kremer and Gebhardt share a similar idealism, intensity, and dedication. When Gebhardt shows Kremer slides of Stalinist atrocities against religion in general—and Christian art, church buildings, and Catholic priests in particular—he starts to make collaboration with the Nazis seem reasonable. The next day, Gebhardt offers Kremer a sophisticated argument that Judas was the most pious disciple of Christ in that he recognized the role he had to play in creating the situation whereby Christ would redeem humankind. Later, Gebhardt describes how two days before his ordination he traded the black of the priest's cassock for that of an SS uniform, arguing that he knew he could not change the world in the former, but could in the latter.

It may be useful to compare *The Ninth Day*'s opposition of Kremer and Gebhardt to the comparable characters in Costa-Gavras's *Amen.* Apart from would-be whistle-blower Kurt Gerstein (Ulrich Tukur), all of Costa-Gavras's Nazis are pure villains. Schlöndorff, on the other hand, as in *The Ogre,* challenges us to experience the lure of the Third Reich. One can similarly contrast *The Ninth Day*'s portrayal of the Bishop of Luxembourg with Costa-Gavras's condemnation of the Vatican's silence about the Holocaust. When Kremer, who has been trying all week to see the bishop, is finally able to talk to him, he encounters a father figure who is as confused as he is. Schlöndorff presents the bishop as much more ambiguous than Costa-Gavras's smug, cynical Vatican curia. The bishop defends the pope's refusal to oppose Hitler directly, fearing that direct confrontation may cost lives through direct reprisals. He encourages Kremer to follow his conscience, and one senses, when Kremer does so, that the discussion has strengthened his resolve. Schlöndorff's project has been seen by several commentators as a response to Costa-Gavras's adaptation of Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy* (1963), in itself a landmark work that raised questions about the Catholic Church's complicity in the Holocaust.[8]

A further comparison with *Amen* is instructive in contrasting Costa-Gavras's reliance on melodrama with Schlöndorff's more ascetic approach. Schlöndorff's Kremer and Costa-Gavras's Father Fontana are both priests from the privileged class faced with moral choices. But where Costa-Gavras casts the strikingly handsome Mathieu Kassovitz as his hero priest, Schlöndorff asks us to identify with an actor whose appearance connotes pain and deprivation. Where Costa-Gavras relies on extravagant spectacle, shooting in the former Rumanian Communist palaces to indicate the wealth and power of the Vatican, Schlöndorff employs a much more modest mise-en-scène. Where Costa-Gavras's narrative line is linear, Schlöndorff's is more fragmented and circular. Where Costa-Gavras's heroes, the disillusioned Nazi and the idealistic priest, externalize their internal feelings through their interactions, Schlöndorff's hero must face his struggles alone. In both cases, however, the priest heroes voluntarily choose life in the concentration camp and the accompanying risk of death. This ultimate expiation of survivor guilt allows both movies to share in the ongoing work of processing the experience of the Holocaust. However, where Costa-Gavras tries to be audience-friendly even at the risk of approaching melodrama, Schlöndorff reaches for a spiritualism of form as well as content.

AN AESTHETIC CHALLENGE

As the Holocaust recedes into a past beyond the immediate historical memory of an increasing percentage of any audience, *The Ninth Day* is a welcome addition to the filmic archive on the subject. Its lack of sentimentality, its avoidance of facile finger-pointing, and its unfashionable acknowledgement of a now all-but-forgotten Catholic intellectual tradition give it a subtle integrity. Schlöndorff has stated that he did not want to make a movie like *Schindler's List* (1993) or *The Pianist* (2002), which would treat the concentration camps in a spectacular, grandiose style.[9] He sought instead to emphasize, as Bernard had done in his book, the precise, limited experience of a particular group of internees. The director's self-imposed limitations are striking precisely because he does not argue for the universality of the Holocaust experience. He does not reduce the horror to "We are all guilty," but rather explores the sense that some are very guilty, others less so, and still others can become heroes even if they share in some of the guilt. The German filmmaker reminds us of the virtue of modesty.

In *The Ninth Day,* Schlöndorff sets himself an ambitious aesthetic challenge, working with a script that a Hollywood producer might consider dangerously wordy, and with a main character whose principal actions are merely to listen and think. At its least successful, *The Ninth Day* splits into two movies—a horrifying depiction of concentration camp life, and a talky chamber drama that turns these grim realities into abstract moral concepts. At its most successful, it integrates these two worlds into a satisfying dialectic. *The Ninth Day*'s back-and-forth movement between two locations and two time frames ultimately compares a world of material comfort, verbal conflict, and moral distress

with one of deprivation, physical torment, but quietly emerging moral certainty.

Consider, for example, Kremer's first encounter with the vicar general. The scene opens with Kremer going into the cathedral to pray. In extreme long shot, we see a figure crossing the screen. Over a medium shot of Kremer kneeling and praying, we hear the silken voice of actor Götz Burger saying: "Henri Kremer, praised be Jesus Christ." We only observe the face of the vicar general in the next shot. The scene then moves to the sacristy. An elderly servant brings Kremer a cup of tea and then begins to lay out the vestments for Mass, while the vicar discusses the political situation for the pope and the Luxembourg church. As the scene begins to delineate the tension between the opportunism of the vicar general and Kremer's principles, the vicar rises from his chair to get ready for Mass. We see him prepare the chalice in the foreground, with Kremer sitting in the background.

As the vicar opens the bottle of sacramental wine, the squeak of the corkscrew triggers a flashback. Kremer is suddenly back in the camp, seated at a table with the other priests. He turns the corkscrew on the bottle of wine that the SS officers will use to mock the holy sacrament. We hear the second cork popping; intense strings play on the soundtrack. With sarcastic formality, the officers make each priest introduce himself to the group, and we come to realize that the Luxembourg priests are imprisoned as foreigners rather than as Germans. The cleric who previously offered Kremer water is now identified as a Norwegian professor. As the flashback continues, we see Kremer being dragged away because he is unable to drink the wine in one gulp and has not poured the rest on his head as the others have done. As we return to the sacristy, Kremer becomes assertive and gets up from his chair after accusing the pope of being more interested in promoting the cult of the Virgin Mary than in saving the lives of Luxembourgian priests. As the vicar finishes robing for Mass, a low-angle shot shows Kremer's clenched fist in the foreground, indicating the priest's controlled anger.

Schlöndorff creates planes of action here that subtly underscore the class structure of the church and the hypocrisy of the vicar. His mixing of past and present creates a dialectic between the sacred and the profane, between overt evil and appealingly disguised evil, and between opportunism and idealism. Not all of *The Ninth Day* has this brilliance. But in a post-Holocaust world from which, according to philosopher Theodor Adorno, poetry was forever excluded, one is grateful for such shinings.

NOTES

1. However, Schlöndorff was not the originator of *The Ninth Day* project; it was originally to be directed by Polish filmmaker Krzystof Zanussi. When Schlöndorff took over the project, he revised the script and changed the casting. Part of his interest in the project came out of his own positive memories of priests at the French Jesuit boarding school he attended. For more information on the film's preproduction, see Thomas Til Radevagen, "Ein düsteres Kapitel der Nazi-Herrschaft," *filmecho-filmwoche* 28 (July 12, 2003): 34; "Schlöndorff's Neunter Tag," *filmecho-filmwoche* 40 (October 4, 2003): 5; and Volker Schlöndorff, "Märtyrer müssen nicht unbedingt Fanatiker sein," interview by Claude François, *Luxembourger Wort* (January 31, 2004), Kultur section: 5.
2. Jean Bernard, *Pfarrerblock 25487. Ein Bericht*, 2nd ed. (Munich, Germany: Anton Pustet, 1962). Excerpts in *Der neunte Tag - Pfarrerblock 25487,* ed. Jürgen Haase and Léon Zeches (Luxembourg: éditions saint-paul, 2004), 110-20.
3. To understand *The Ninth Day* fully, one must be aware of Luxembourg's specific historical relations. As a country historically caught in the territorial pulls between France and Germany, Luxembourg—whose population is 95-percent Catholic—has often allied itself with the Catholic Church rather than with either of its neighbors as a way of preserving its national identity. With the Nazi invasion, the Germans used the pan-Germanic slogan "Heim ins Reich," or "Come home to the Empire," to appeal to the German-speaking majority within the multilingual country. German actions, however, such as imprisoning the Luxembourg priests along with Polish, Czech, and Belgian priests rather than with their German counterparts, suggest that the slogan was only so much lip service.
4. Volker Schlöndorff and Margarethe von Trotta, "Interview with Schlöndorff and von Trotta," produced by Florence Dauman for Argos Films and Arte Développement, in Volker Schlöndorff, *Coup de grâce*. DVD. Criterion Collection, 2003.
5. Volker Schlöndorff, "Diese Geschichte tut weh," interviewed by Hans Joachim Neubauer, *Rheinischer Merkur* (January 15, 2004). Cf. Schlöndorff, "Märtyrer," 5.
6. Schlöndorff, "Märtyrer," 5.
7. Ibid.
8. Radevagen, 34.
9. Schlöndorff, "Märtyrer," 5.

HANS-BERNHARD MOELLER, Associate Professor of Germanic Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, and **GEORGE LELLIS,** Professor of Communication at Coker College, are the authors of *Volker Schlöndorff's Cinema: Adaptation, Politics, and the "Movie-Appropriate"* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2002). Both have recently contributed essays to *Straight Through the Heart: Doris Dörrie, German Filmmaker and Author* (Scarecrow Press, 2004).

ABSTRACT Volker Schlöndorff for the first time directly approaches the subject of religious faith in portraying Henri Kremer, a Catholic priest imprisoned at Dachau. The director's meticulous style contrasts Golgotha-like images of torture and deprivation with abstract ethical dialogues between the priest and a former seminarian turned mid-level Nazi leader.

BOOK REVIEWS

Beyond Flesh: Queer Masculinities and Nationalism in Israeli Cinema

By Raz Yosef. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2004. $62.00 cloth; $21.95 paper. 203 pages.

Raz Yosef's *Beyond Flesh* is yet another indication of growing scholarly interest in Israeli cinema. Its appearance reminds us of the recent international success of films such as *Late Marriage* (2002) and *Broken Wings* (2003), and of the publication of books such as Yosefa Loshitzky's *Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen* (2001), which offers a seminal reading of the link between Orientalism and sexuality in Israeli cinema. This link also serves as the main axis for Yosef's project. The expansion of the discussion of Israeli cinema suggests that the medium might now serve alongside Hebrew literature as a major expressive tool of a torn and polarized society.

Israel has gone through numerous changes since the publication of Ella Shohat's now canonical *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* in 1989. As the first scholar to offer a comprehensive study of Israeli filmmaking and its role in constructing Israeli nationality, Shohat had to map a whole new field of study. Her followers, however, have been encouraged to look more closely at more specific aspects of Israeli cinema. As a groundbreaking piece of work, some of Shohat's fundamental arguments are read as axiomatic today—the inherited inferiority of Oriental Jews in Israeli society and the Zionist movement as an extension of European colonialism are self-evident and well-rehearsed concepts. The array of voices in contemporary Israeli culture, reflecting a disintegrated society, requires further investigation and specification. This is what Yosef does in *Beyond Flesh.*

Drawing on Loshitzky's discussion of racism and sexuality in Israeli culture, Yosef identifies an unexplored aspect of Israeli cinema: its role in the construction of masculinity and queerness in a militant, heterosexist society that was founded on the myth of the Sabra, the new "muscle Jew" of Palestine. Rather than focusing on the booming "gay" Israeli cinema of the last decade, Yosef's work provides a subversive textual reading that aims to liberate the "repressed" queer Jew in what are generally perceived as canonical or at least mainstream cinematic texts, culled from different genres and eras: the book ambitiously encompasses propagandistic pre-state Zionist films, 1970s and 1980s military films, and 1990s "queer films." Although the last chapter in the book deals with the work of self-proclaimed gay directors, it is by no means the book's main concern. As Yosef characterizes his study in the introduction, in most of the films he analyzes there are no "ostensibly gay characters," and "the word "gay" is not mentioned in any form or context" (5).

Yosef rightly claims that the relationship between the New Jew and the Queer Jew should not be read "in terms of dichotomies, but in terms of ambivalence, displacement and disidentification . . . the queer Jew is not the other of the new Zionist self, but a rather structural element of it" (3). Israeli hegemony defines itself and its others through a dialectical process. Zionism's disavowal of queerness, Yosef insists, attests to its dependence on it.

Using the body of work of scholars such as David Biale, Magnus Hirschfeld, and Daniel Boyarin as a basic point of departure—their arguments are coherently introduced to the reader in the first chapter, and are illustrated through an analysis of classic Zionist films such as *Adama* (1947) and *Sabra* (1933)—Yosef attempts to break down the Zionist project to its most basic components, and by doing so to reveal its homophobic, misogynist, and racist postulates. The movement that was founded to transform the Jewish body in its "natural" habitat employed methods of oppression and exclusion in order to shape its ideal character. These strategies are not dissimilar to those that were used by anti-Semites against European Jews themselves, who, in response, invented Zionism. The "Other" Yosef speaks for is not only, or even primarily, homosexuals, but also Oriental Jews and Palestinians (explored in chapters 3 and 4 respectively). The links that Yosef articulates between different kinds of oppression in Israeli society makes his project both poignant and alarming.

Considered taboo for many years, gay culture has gradually penetrated the Israeli mainstream. Gay people today (such as journalists Gal Ochovsky and Avner Bernheimer, the filmmaker Eytan Fox, the musician Ivry Lidder, and the former member of Parliament Professor Uzi Even) are sought-after players in political and cultural arenas. However, the racist notions on which Israeli society was founded remain very much intact. Interestingly, while Ashkenazi gay men are now portrayed as the heirs of the "State generation" forebears (in films such as Eytan Fox's *Yossi and Jagger* [2003], which is not discussed in the book)—no matter how troublesome this portrayal is—Sephardic gay men are still being feminized or objectified on screen, bearing the brunt of the old derogatory and exclusionist stereotypes usually used to describe forbidden gay desires. Unlike their Ashkenazi counterparts, they are not assimilated into Israeli mainstream culture. It is not so much their sexuality as their "non-whiteness" that marks them as the eternal outsiders of Israeli society. As Yosef claims, Sephardim, whether male or female, gay or straight, are all denied mastery. They are the new manifestation of the European Diaspora, the homosexual Jew. Their portrayal as diseased and infected prevails in mainstream cinema, but also in what Yosef calls "the Israeli new queer cinema." Conforming to a racist approach, the new queer cinema "produces and enforces Ashkenazi gay normative identity through the repetition of a colonial fantasy that confines Sephardic men to a rigid set of ethnic roles and identities" (166).

It comes as no surprise that Yosef is less interested in exploring the rise of the gay community in Israel and its reflections on the screen, itself a fascinating and unanticipated phenomenon. For Yosef, the Israeli gay revolution is compromised by all the biases that have characterized the Zionist movement and the Old Ashkenazi elite since the beginning of the European immigration to Palestine. Yosef's argument against the "whiteness" of the local gay community seems

even more disturbing when taking into account the fact that the gay movement in Israel was inspired by, among other things, the Israeli Black Panthers movement from the early 1970s, which fought for equality between Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews (the gay community shares the same "integrationist" point of view). Even pioneering filmmakers such as the late Amos Guttman, whose movies—including *Drifting* (1983), *Bar 51* (1986), *Himmo, King of Jerusalem* (1987), and *Amazing Grace* (1992)—were the first to deal with issues of homosexuality and AIDS, were, according to Yosef, caught in a racist, Eurocentric matrix. Yosef's analysis of Guttman's work is an original and significant comment on a film director who is usually seen as the ultimate voice of Israeli outcasts. In Yosef's reading, even Guttman could not escape Ashkenazi society's deep-rooted racism.

Yosef's work is indebted to the evolving discourse of masculinity studies in film studies, which he uses, together with postcolonial theory, to deconstruct the Zionist national project. *Beyond Flesh* is a unique project in its unusual pairing of both of these disciplines, which together reveal not only the false "naturalness" of heterosexual Ashkenazi masculinity, but also the oppressive, colonial nature of the Zionist project as a whole. Yosef offers an interesting and compelling interpretation of the intersection of two different types of discrimination, demonstrating how the colonial and the homophobic are seamlessly interwoven in the Zionist agenda.

Yosef approaches the films he analyzes as links in a long chain of cinematic representations of masculinity, hence the periodic references to foreign cinemas (e.g., Hollywood melodramas and Fassbinder's take on them; Sergei Eisenstein's films). At the same time, his analysis emphasizes the specific spatial and temporal context in which the Israeli films were made (so a basic knowledge of the country's history, culture and politics is needed to make the most of Yosef's arguments). *Beyond Flesh* functions both as an important contribution to the expanding field of masculinity studies, and as a cultural journey into the Zionist and Israeli psyche, which has been shaped by the grand ideas of heterosexuality, virility, and whiteness in its continual quest for supremacy.

NIR COHEN is completing his Ph.D. on gay narratives in contemporary Israeli cinema in the Film Studies Program at University College London, University of London.

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Beyond the Latin Lover: Marcello Mastroianni, Masculinity, and Italian Cinema

By Jacqueline Reich. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004. $49.95 cloth; $21.95 paper. 224 pages.

Marcello Mastroianni (1923-96) was certainly the most important and best known of any Italian movie star, and he was arguably the only truly international male star that Italy produced in the postwar cinema. Jacqueline Reich's study of his career, his image in popular culture, and the crucial role he played in Italian cinematic history makes a fundamental contribution to understanding the paradoxical nature of his international fame. For most spectators, Mastroianni's name was synonymous with "Latin Lover," but as Reich clearly shows, his film image was far different from this superficial judgment. Moreover, Reich sees Mastroianni as the perfect vehicle for revealing the development in Italian postwar culture of very different notions of masculinity.

Mastroianni made some 150 films, and his relationship with Federico Fellini and his performance in *La Dolce Vita* (1959) made him an international star. Reich rightly interprets his role in this Fellini blockbuster as the source of his screen identity as the inept male protagonist (the *inetto*), the Italian schlemiel who was, in fact, far removed from the lady-killer that the term Latin Lover implies. Fellini intuited that his actor and friend was the perfect vehicle for a film that proposed a view of contemporary Italian society as one based upon artificial images rather than substance, public relations rather than authentic human relationships. The Trevi Fountain sequence in *La Dolce Vita,* probably the most famous scene in postwar Italian cinema, underscores the impotence of the journalist Mastroianni plays: just as he is about to kiss Anita Ekberg, the fountain's water turns off!

After this demonstration that Mastroianni's role in *La Dolce Vita* was a defining one for his popular image on the screen, a subsequent chapter traces the evolution of Mastroianni's image in two important Sicilian-based comedies by very different directors—Mauro Bolognini's *Il bell'Antonio* (1960) and Pietro Germi's *Divorce, Italian Style* (1961). In the first film, Mastroianni plays an impotent Don Giovanni, while in the second, he is cuckolded by his younger wife. Mastroianni once again combines a superficially Latin Lover social mask with a more authentic persona as an impotent loser. Reich carefully shows how, in these two classic comedies of manners, the male protagonist must bear the burden of a society bound by very ancient views on masculinity. In Sicily, more than in the rest of Italy, a man's public image and his sense of virility (his *gallismo*) are constantly being besieged by the fear of being impotent or cuckolded—the fates that Mastroianni's characters in these two films suffer.

An entire chapter is devoted to the way in which Fellini employed Mastroianni to parody the very notion of a Latin Lover Mastroianni in *8½* (1963), *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* (1969), and *The City of Women* (1980). Perhaps this last film, where Fellini places Mastroianni in the midst of a hostile feminist convention, is the best example of how Fellini manipulated the public image of the Latin Lover that had become Mastroianni's stereotype. Another chapter focuses on the 12 films Mastroianni made with Italy's other international superstar—Sophia Loren. These films are the best showcases for Mastroianni's versatility and talent. The plot of these comedies usually involves an unruly woman who rebels against patriarchal authority, personified by an Italian *inetto* (Mastroianni) who is incapable of dealing with changing gender roles. This kind of social comedy may best be seen in Ettore Scola's *A Special Day* (1977), where Mastroianni plays a homosexual; in Vittorio De Sica's *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (1963) and *Marriage, Italian Style* (1964); and also in Robert Altman's *Ready to Wear* (1994), a film that cleverly

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parodies the famous striptease Sophia Loren performs for Mastroianni in the first De Sica film mentioned above. Another chapter explores the ways in which a number of fine directors exploited Mastroianni's image as he grew older: Ettore Scola's *La Nuit de Varennes* (1982); Giuseppe Tornatore's *Everybody's Fine* (1990); and Fellini's *Ginger and Fred* (1985) and *Interview* (1987). Old age is the final indignity the inept male antihero must endure, but in Mastroianni's case, he always does so with humor and grace.

Jacqueline Reich's book is beautifully organized, impeccably researched, and written with simplicity and style. Most books on Italian actors are frothy confections without much substance. This book, on the other hand, satisfies the requirements of the specialist in Italian cinema without abandoning the general reader or the student. In the process of tracing the trajectory of Mastroianni's long film career, Professor Reich is able to show how his film image reflects the unstable political, social, and sexual climate of postwar Italy during a time of incredibly rapid socio-economic change. It should be required reading for anyone interested in Italian films.

PETER BONDANELLA is Distinguished Professor of Italian at Indiana University.

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Ciné-Ethnography: Jean Rouch

Edited and translated by Steven Feld. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. $77.95 cloth; $29.95 paper. 456 pages.

Jean Rouch was killed in a car crash in February 2004. Despite his age and growing frailty, his death was nevertheless sudden and shocking. His many admirers sought comfort from the fact that Rouch died in Niger, the place to which he had always returned, the place where he had forged life-long friendships with a handful of collaborators, and the site of his ethnographic cinema. Rouch had begun filming in West Africa during the 1940s. Fascinated by the phenomena of trance and spirit possession, he increasingly explored the transformative potential of the camera, his innovative film practice serving to profoundly unsettle conventional categories of documentary and fiction, reality and the imagination, Europe and Africa. Over the course of 50 years, Rouch made almost a hundred films, including classics such as *Les Maîtres fous* (1954), *Jaguar* (1957), and *Chronicle of a Summer* (1960). Although his last major film, *Madame L'Eau,* was completed in 1992, he continued to be active and engaged in questions of anthropology and cinema until his death.

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In his introduction, Feld charts the somewhat haphazard process by which Rouch materials have become available. During his lifetime, Rouch's films were often difficult to see: prints of many of the classic films were not available, and many of us depended on the circulation of bootleg copies of his work. In addition, much of his writing was scattered across different journals and much of it was inaccessible to English-speaking audiences. Despite these difficulties, interest in Rouch has been consistently high. Indeed, curiosity about his unique form of cinema has continued to grow as new generations of students have sought to work creatively with many of his ideas and practices.

The essays by Rouch in *Ciné-Ethnography* were written during the 1970s. In "The Camera and Man," first published in Paul Hockings's *Principles of Visual Anthropology,* Rouch traces the development of ethnographic cinema, locating himself within the tradition and establishing the fundamentals of his own practice—the lone filmmaker and the embodied camera (the use of portable, handheld equipment so that the technology becomes an extension of the filmmaker's body). He considers the contribution of the editor and weighs the merits of subtitles and narration. Rouch's writing is lively and forthright, its authority deriving from careful reflection on his own first-hand experience. Other essays in the book's first part include a history of cinema in Africa and two important discussions of the complex interrelationships between spirit possession, the trance, and the subjectivity of the filmmaker.

The second section of *Ciné-Ethnography* contains previously published interviews with Rouch. Building on the preceding essays, these exchanges offer a fascinating glimpse of the filmmaker's engaging and yet enigmatic personality. Moreover, they provide important additional information about his work. Lucien Taylor's conversation with Rouch, "A Life on the Edge of Film and Anthropology," is comprehensively biographical. Rouch's description of his upbringing and intellectual formation is richly suggestive, conveying the

parodies the famous striptease Sophia Loren performs for Mastroianni in the first De Sica film mentioned above. Another chapter explores the ways in which a number of fine directors exploited Mastroianni's image as he grew older: Ettore Scola's *La Nuit de Varennes* (1982); Giuseppe Tornatore's *Everybody's Fine* (1990); and Fellini's *Ginger and Fred* (1985) and *Interview* (1987). Old age is the final indignity the inept male antihero must endure, but in Mastroianni's case, he always does so with humor and grace.

Jacqueline Reich's book is beautifully organized, impeccably researched, and written with simplicity and style. Most books on Italian actors are frothy confections without much substance. This book, on the other hand, satisfies the requirements of the specialist in Italian cinema without abandoning the general reader or the student. In the process of tracing the trajectory of Mastroianni's long film career, Professor Reich is able to show how his film image reflects the unstable political, social, and sexual climate of postwar Italy during a time of incredibly rapid socio-economic change. It should be required reading for anyone interested in Italian films.

PETER BONDANELLA is Distinguished Professor of Italian at Indiana University.

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By Tony Williams. London: Wallflower Press, 2003. $61.00 cloth; $20.00 paper. 214 pages.

For all the recent critical attention to the explosion of personal and politically committed filmmaking in America in the 1970s, the genre in which some of the most subversive and revolutionary work of the era was being done has received relatively scant coverage. While the achievements of artists such as Martin Scorsese, Robert Altman, Warren Beatty, and other 70s icons are clearly significant, their contributions to film culture have obscured the equally potent work of those independent filmmakers who, working on the margins and in the culturally disreputable field of horror, exposed the contradictions and complexities of post-Watergate America in a manner more provocative and unsettling than their Hollywood counterparts.

George A. Romero is one of the most important and distinctive of these filmmakers (a group that includes Larry Cohen, Wes Craven, and Tobe Hooper), and in Tony Williams' critical study he has been given the kind of thoughtful consideration his work warrants. While other writers have dissected Romero's films with eloquence and intelligence—Robin Wood's essay on *Day of the Dead* comes to mind—this is the first study of the director that is simultaneously broader (it covers all of the director's films from early obscurities up to the 2000 release *Bruiser*) and deeper than all of the Romero scholarship that has preceded it.

Williams' examination of the artistic, financial, and political influences on Romero's work, from EC comics and literary naturalism to Reaganomics and the changes in the Hollywood studio system, yields a startling array of insights into the immense complexity of the director's oeuvre. Whereas most writing on the director has focused almost exclusively on his zombie trilogy (*Night of the Living Dead, Dawn of the Dead, Day of the Dead*) and has repeatedly covered the same ideological ground (analyzing the films as allegories for the dangers of unrestrained capitalism), Williams argues that Romero's art reaches much further than even his

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champions recognize. Throughout the book, Williams helps the reader look beyond the obvious to recognize Romero as a chronicler of American society whose vision is as complex as that of a John Ford, Howard Hawks, or Orson Welles.

Perhaps the most provocative component of Williams' argument is his case for Romero as the cinematic heir to Zola's tradition of literary naturalism. At first this assertion seems slightly ridiculous, given that horror is a genre known for excess, and Romero is one of the form's most celebrated practitioners of such excess. Yet Williams makes the case that Romero's concern with citizens who are the victims of forces beyond their control is an extension of Zola's deterministic fiction, and that both artists skillfully navigate the tension between such determinism and the potential for societal and personal change. Throughout the book, Williams draws instructive parallels between Zola's work and Romero's, illuminating the themes and styles of both authors and the times in which they live.

This sense of historical context is Williams' greatest strength as a scholar (it was also evident in his excellent 1997 book on the films of Larry Cohen), and it gives *The Cinema of George A. Romero* a scope wider than that of a simple auteur study. As Williams traces Romero's career on a film-by-film basis, he also provides an informal history of America's shift toward conservatism and how it affected the film industry in ways that were not favorable to an anti-establishment artist of Romero's stature and depth. Like Romero's movies, which combine intimate personal drama with cogent political analysis and Godardian commentary on cinematic genres, Williams' book operates on many levels at once, making the work a useful one not only for Romero fans but for historians and political scientists.

If there's a weakness to the author's approach, it's in the occasional tendency toward excessive referencing of other works, to the point that Romero and his movies get lost amongst the numerous mentions of Zola, Hawks, Welles, and other novelists and filmmakers. At times it seems as though Williams is forcing his defense of Romero by comparing the director with artists who are generally accepted as masters. Such overreaching is unnecessary, given that in the individual analyses of the films, Williams always makes his case for Romero's artistry with force and clarity.

This is a minor complaint, however, since for the most part the comparisons with other artists provide great insight into Romero's style and thematic obsessions. Perhaps the most productive comparison is with Stephen King, whom Williams sees as a fellow heir to literary naturalism as well as another influence on Romero's work. Like Romero, King tells horror stories in which the supernatural elements are actually secondary to the grim realities of Americans struggling to survive, both psychologically and physically, in a materialistic society that has drained life of moral purpose.

Interestingly, Williams also sees in both King's and Romero's work an enormous debt to the horror comic books of the 1950s, an influence that appears to be in opposition to that of literary naturalism. Yet it's exactly this combination of warring traditions and styles that gives Romero's work its complexity, and his best films (such as *Dawn of the Dead,* which is simultaneously political satire, action film, tragic love story, and apocalyptic horror tale) combine an astonishing variety of influences and tones without becoming incoherent or unfocused. A case in point is the 1982 release *Creepshow,* an anthology film that skillfully incorporates the influences of Stephen King (who wrote the screenplay), EC comics, and literary naturalism. Interestingly, Williams argues that part of the reason *Creepshow* isn't quite as successful as Romero's other films is that it's too explicit in its approach. Whereas nearly all of Romero's movies are informed by both the visual style and political sensibility of EC comics (which are savage assaults on Eisenhower-era conformism, just as Romero's films attack complacency and consumerism), *Creepshow* makes the EC influence too obvious and overt, and in doing so loses some of the subtlety and complexity of Romero's other work.

Yet Williams points out that *Creepshow* follows through on Romero's concerns with the tensions and contradictions that define American family life (particularly in the *Father's Day* episode), and he reveals that even the relatively lackluster second story of the film has links to literary naturalism that make it worth a look. The writer's account of *Creepshow*'s production history, influences, and ultimate meaning is particularly valuable given the fact that up until now even Romero partisans such as Robin Wood have unfairly dismissed it as an unimportant work. The rich commentary on this film is indicative of the author's ability to reveal new meanings in all of Romero's movies; Williams is as adept at rescuing underrated pictures like *Creepshow* or *Knightriders* from critical neglect as he is at digging beneath the surface to provide original perspectives on widely studied films such as the *Dead* trilogy.

Each chapter reveals Romero to be a director of uncommon integrity and complexity whose devotion to realist horror is all the more valuable now that he's one of its only practitioners. Romero's harshly critical view of American consumerist culture kept him from attaining a wide audience in the conservative climate of Reagan, Bush, and Clinton, and his avowedly anti-escapist approach to horror seems all the more necessary in a period when Hollywood studios are remaking classic 1970s horror films (including Romero's own *Dawn of the Dead*) and rendering them harmless by stripping them of their political meanings. As of this writing, Romero is at work on the next chapter in his *Dead* series, and given that he often creates his best work in troubled times, it's hard not to have high expectations for the piece. In the meantime, one can look to Tony Williams' indispensable book for an abundance of enlightening observations about this important American director.

JIM HEMPHILL's award-winning film *Bad Reputation* is currently playing on the international film festival circuit.

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The Cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski: Variations on Destiny and Chance

By Marek Haltof. London: Wallflower Press, 2004. $65.00 cloth; $20.00 paper. 224 pages.

The Films of Krzysztof Kieslowski: The Liminal Image

By Joseph G. Kickasola. New York: Continuum, 2004. $89.95 cloth; $19.95 paper. 352 pages.

Krzysztof Kieslowski was the youngest of the inventive auteurs—including Krzysztof Zanussi, Andrzej Wajda, Jerzy Skolimowski—who limned Polish social, political, and cultural life in the mid-twentieth century and beyond. He was also the last to gain a strong international reputation, and English-language scholars are now making up for lost time. His translator and friend Annette Insdorf published the first book-length critical study in English on his work (*Double Lives, Second Chances: The Cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski*) in 1999, and 2004 has brought two more: that of Marek Haltof, which is concise and direct, and that of Joseph G. Kickasola, which is more discursive and wide-ranging. Both take care to situate Kieslowski's life and work within Poland's specific historical and sociopolitical conditions, with Kickasola harking back to the region's first Slavic settlement between the sixth and tenth centuries—no mere historical exercise, since Slavicization fostered a Christian identity that helped cement the area's unity around the year 1000 and has exerted a lasting influence that screen artists as diverse as Kieslowski, Zanussi, and Jerzy Kawalerowicz have felt compelled to explore.

After being rejected by the distinguished Lódz Film School no fewer than three times, Kieslowski finally matriculated there in 1964 at age 23; ten years later he was a leading figure in Polish documentary cinema. At the time, he preferred documentary to fiction filmmaking for various reasons, including his interest in conditions under Poland's then-Communist governing system and his fascination with what Kickasola aptly calls the "paradox" of whether and how "objective" reality might be caught by the "inherently subjective" filmmaker—a problem Kiesloswki thought and wrote about as early as his student days. Kickasola and Haltof both trace his growing involvement with fiction film, which was motivated by his growing realization that artifice is inescapable in cinema and should therefore be actively engaged with rather than passively sidestepped; they note his subsequent shift of emphasis from "authentic" physical and psychological observation to a quest for "intuitive" nuances of subjectivity, interiority, and what might be called the human soul.

Although such early Kieslowski dramas as *The Scar* (*Blizna,* 1976) and *Camera Buff* (*Amator,* 1979) have been gathering increased attention in recent years—thanks largely to companies like Kino Video which have made them readily available—his reputation rests most firmly on films made after the Solidarity period, when his concern with existential mystery and spiritual conundrum was growing at a rapid pace. Chief among these are the ten-part *Decalogue,* hour-long episodes made for Polish television in the late 80s; *The Double Life of Véronique,* a French-Polish-Norwegian co-production released in 1991; and *Three Colors: Blue, White, Red,* a multinational trilogy produced in 1993 and 1994, after which Kieslowski announced his retirement from filmmaking, only to continue working on a subsequent trilogy to be called *Paradise, Hell, Purgatory,* which was tragically terminated by his untimely death in 1996.

The importance of Kieslowski's later, more mystical films is reflected in the subtitles of both new critical studies. Kickasola's formulation, *The Liminal Image,* reminds us that despite cinema's traditional reliance on the photochemical representation of physical objects—a reliance that has become less absolute in the age of computer-generated imagery, but is still a usual touchstone for motion-picture art—film is an excellent tool for probing beneath the observable manifestations of gesture, behavior, and environment. Haltof's subtitle, *Variations on Destiny and Chance,* points to a related facet of Kieslowski's art: its continual investment in notions of fate, fortune, and the unknowable nature of the larger existential matrices within which our lives unfold.

Given the greater length and more ambitious aims of Kickasola's book, it's not surprising that it delves more deeply into the intricacies, subtleties, and yes, liminalities of Kieslowski's oeuvre. On the level of the apparatus, one wishes the volume had a filmography and that its frame enlargements were larger. On the analytical level, the book would be more persuasive if Kickasola had been more thorough in distinguishing and defining such all-important terms as abstraction, transcendence, and liminality itself. Many images that he identifies as "abstract," for instance, strike me as merely recalcitrant in offering up a firm visual signification—they're hard to parse at first sight, that is, but eventually yield a clear meaning, and are immediately clear when one views the movie more than once. This said, Kickasola's study is a very impressive undertaking in scholarly film criticism, bringing to bear not only a keen understanding of the tropes and chronotopes that preoccupied the Polish auteur at various points in his career, but also the author's own clear interest in the human and spiritual enigmas that fuel Kieslowski's most engrossing films.

Not quite so philosophical in its aims, Haltof's book is a quicker and less challenging read. It moves swiftly through Kieslowski's career, examining its phases in more breadth than depth, and focusing more on the films' expressive surfaces than on the hidden layers underneath. The first chapter's title refers to an "unrepresented world" that Kieslowski was determined to film; in Kickasola's hands such a phrase would probably refer to metaphysical meanings, but in Haltof's treatment it refers to the phase of modern Polish history shaped by Communist inefficiency and corruption—a crucial point of emphasis, since this became a politically and emotionally charged fixation for Kieslowski and other practitioners of the Cinema of Distrust, the label Haltof aptly uses for Poland's new filmmaking wave of the late 70s.

Again, this is not the Kieslowski volume of one's dreams. For all its sociopolitical leanings, it gives fewer details than

one might like about the upheavals of the Solidarity era and their powerful influence on Kieslowski's work. And while the Kickasola book occasionally gets a tad unspecific when dealing with Kieslowski's mystical side, Haltof gives this very little emphasis; it's odd that his *Decalogue* chapter starts by underscoring the "metaphysics" aspect of the series, for instance, only to claim eight pages later that *Decalogue 1* is the only episode to stage a direct engagement with issues that might genuinely be called spiritual or religious.

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The Cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski: Variations on Destiny and Chance

By Marek Haltof. London: Wallflower Press, 2004. $65.00 cloth; $20.00 paper. 224 pages.

The Films of Krzysztof Kieslowski: The Liminal Image

By Joseph G. Kickasola. New York: Continuum, 2004. $89.95 cloth; $19.95 paper. 352 pages.

Krzysztof Kieslowski was the youngest of the inventive auteurs—including Krzysztof Zanussi, Andrzej Wajda, Jerzy Skolimowski—who limned Polish social, political, and cultural life in the mid-twentieth century and beyond. He was also the last to gain a strong international reputation, and English-language scholars are now making up for lost time. His translator and friend Annette Insdorf published the first book-length critical study in English on his work (*Double Lives, Second Chances: The Cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski*) in 1999, and 2004 has brought two more: that of Marek Haltof, which is concise and direct, and that of Joseph G. Kickasola, which is more discursive and wide-ranging. Both take care to situate Kieslowski's life and work within Poland's specific historical and sociopolitical conditions, with Kickasola harking back to the region's first Slavic settlement between the sixth and tenth centuries—no mere historical exercise, since Slavicization fostered a Christian identity that helped cement the area's unity around the year 1000 and has exerted a lasting influence that screen artists as diverse as Kieslowski, Zanussi, and Jerzy Kawalerowicz have felt compelled to explore.

After being rejected by the distinguished Lódz Film School no fewer than three times, Kieslowski finally matriculated there in 1964 at age 23; ten years later he was a leading figure in Polish documentary cinema. At the time, he preferred documentary to fiction filmmaking for various reasons, including his interest in conditions under Poland's then-Communist governing system and his fascination with what Kickasola aptly calls the "paradox" of whether and how "objective" reality might be caught by the "inherently subjective" filmmaker—a problem Kiesloswki thought and wrote about as early as his student days. Kickasola and Haltof both trace his growing involvement with fiction film, which was motivated by his growing realization that artifice is inescapable in cinema and should therefore be actively engaged with rather than passively sidestepped; they note his subsequent shift of emphasis from "authentic" physical and psychological observation to a quest for "intuitive" nuances of subjectivity, interiority, and what might be called the human soul.

Although such early Kieslowski dramas as *The Scar* (*Blizna,* 1976) and *Camera Buff* (*Amator,* 1979) have been gathering increased attention in recent years—thanks largely to companies like Kino Video which have made them readily available—his reputation rests most firmly on films made after the Solidarity period, when his concern with existential mystery and spiritual conundrum was growing at a rapid pace. Chief among these are the ten-part *Decalogue,* hour-long episodes made for Polish television in the late 80s; *The Double Life of Véronique,* a French-Polish-Norwegian co-production released in 1991; and *Three Colors: Blue, White, Red,* a multinational trilogy produced in 1993 and 1994, after which Kieslowski announced his retirement from filmmaking, only to continue working on a subsequent trilogy to be called *Paradise, Hell, Purgatory,* which was tragically terminated by his untimely death in 1996.

The importance of Kieslowski's later, more mystical films is reflected in the subtitles of both new critical studies. Kickasola's formulation, *The Liminal Image,* reminds us that despite cinema's traditional reliance on the photochemical representation of physical objects—a reliance that has become less absolute in the age of computer-generated imagery, but is still a usual touchstone for motion-picture art—film is an excellent tool for probing beneath the observable manifestations of gesture, behavior, and environment. Haltof's subtitle, *Variations on Destiny and Chance,* points to a related facet of Kieslowski's art: its continual investment in notions of fate, fortune, and the unknowable nature of the larger existential matrices within which our lives unfold.

Given the greater length and more ambitious aims of Kickasola's book, it's not surprising that it delves more deeply into the intricacies, subtleties, and yes, liminalities of Kieslowski's oeuvre. On the level of the apparatus, one wishes the volume had a filmography and that its frame enlargements were larger. On the analytical level, the book would be more persuasive if Kickasola had been more thorough in distinguishing and defining such all-important terms as abstraction, transcendence, and liminality itself. Many images that he identifies as "abstract," for instance, strike me as merely recalcitrant in offering up a firm visual signification—they're hard to parse at first sight, that is, but eventually yield a clear meaning, and are immediately clear when one views the movie more than once. This said, Kickasola's study is a very impressive undertaking in scholarly film criticism, bringing to bear not only a keen understanding of the tropes and chronotopes that preoccupied the Polish auteur at various points in his career, but also the author's own clear interest in the human and spiritual enigmas that fuel Kieslowski's most engrossing films.

Not quite so philosophical in its aims, Haltof's book is a quicker and less challenging read. It moves swiftly through Kieslowski's career, examining its phases in more breadth than depth, and focusing more on the films' expressive surfaces than on the hidden layers underneath. The first chapter's title refers to an "unrepresented world" that Kieslowski was determined to film; in Kickasola's hands such a phrase would probably refer to metaphysical meanings, but in Haltof's treatment it refers to the phase of modern Polish history shaped by Communist inefficiency and corruption—a crucial point of emphasis, since this became a politically and emotionally charged fixation for Kieslowski and other practitioners of the Cinema of Distrust, the label Haltof aptly uses for Poland's new filmmaking wave of the late 70s.

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Nothing gets the kind of close attention you have been wanting all along. Consonant with the feel-good vibe of *Secrets and Lies* and evoking a metaphysical slant to which Watson returns, *All or Nothing* for Watson becomes a tale of modern urban redemption in which the straitened, atomized lives of Leigh's working-class London family become enlivened by rediscovered bonds at the son's hospital bedside. Mobilizing the insights of Andrew Klevan's 2000 book *Disclosure of the Everyday,* Watson shows how Leigh reveals the transformative potential that is always already implicit in quotidian lives. Watson and Carney agree that personal transformation is the motivating drama in most of Leigh's work, bringing with it a kind of secular spirituality rooted in gray detail and bleak moments. Indeed, for Carney, Leigh may rank alongside Carl Theodor Dreyer and Andrei Tarkovsky.

The Carney and Quart book was the first critical study of Leigh's work and every subsequent book on Leigh must negotiate its rigor and insight. I have yet to read a book that better approximates my experience of watching Leigh's films. My one regret is that, apart from the important BBC plays *Nuts in May* and *Abigail's Party* (1977), I have yet to see many of the early works wherein Carney locates the wellspring of Leigh's improvisatory power and vision.

Animating this study is a distinction between two types of Leigh characters that resonates culturally, politically and spiritually across his work. For Carney, there are those like Rupert and Laetitia Boothe-Braine in *High Hopes* (1988), Nicola in *Life Is Sweet* (1990), and Sebastian in *Naked* (1993) who, mired in a mental image of themselves, pigeon-hole others in prejudices, effectively foreclosing on generous and responsive solidarity. Then there are those like Cyril and Shirley in *High Hopes,* Wendy in *Life Is Sweet,* and Louise in *Naked* who have all the foibles, strengths, and self-doubts of their humanity, and are open to the flows of human interaction. Alison Steadman's giggly and affectionate Wendy still epitomizes the principle of social cohesion in Leigh. It is perhaps unsurprising that Steadman and Leigh were married, while the positive response to the density of experience recalls the thick descriptive methodology through which a Leigh film is arrived at. Evoking the Dickensian and Lawrentian views of human sensibility (as Watson points out), Leigh feels that the individual mindset has consequences for the wider culture, and by this light the generous impulse in Wendy and other Leigh characters has been eroded by consumerism and social mobility in postwar Britain. Not as overtly political as Ken Loach, Leigh has nevertheless chronicled the domestic consequences of the decline of the social consensus imagined by writers from Dickens to George Orwell.

One of the most unexpected aspects of Carney and Quart's book is the way it puts mainstream American cinema in perspective by comparing it with Leigh's cinema. With his focus on characters as mannered and tic-ridden "outsides" (as opposed to Hollywood's granting us access to Forrest Gump's inner kindness despite the goofy exterior), Leigh charts that elusive quality, the "ordinary" moment—the everyday drama of interaction they never show in Hollywood because it occurs between the heroics.

In doing so, Carney shows, Leigh pulls apart the Enlightenment model of agency and volition on which most American movies depend. Recalling classes he has taught—he is Director of Film Studies at Boston University—Carney describes how Americans are often perplexed by a cinema in which nothing seems to happen. But Leigh's drama of transformation is rooted in the layered rehearsal of interpersonal dynamics observed with the patience of a European Ozu. Whilst British Leigh commentators have been preoccupied with the writer-director's purchase on the sociological landscape, Carney convinces us that Leigh and Ozu share a feeling for the interplay of performance and mise-en-scène which moves beyond David Bordwell's pioneering Ozu dichotomy between modernism and tradition. Leigh's conception of experience (unlike that of Hollywood) is durational rather than deadlined, heterogeneous rather than hurried. Carney's examination of space and time in Leigh reveals, as Bordwell has done elsewhere, that the mainstream model of experience conceals as much as it reveals.

But to a British reader, Carney's examination of the inward- and outward-regarding Leigh types does not acknowledge the tug of class in these sensibilities. Class is a British fact of life. Part of Leonard Quart's contribution to this book is a chapter offering biographical and cultural orientation to Leigh's work, including a very good grounding of Leigh's cinema in the context of Thatcherism. But I found myself wanting to read Leigh's solipsists and philanthropists into the social fabric as symptoms of the dispute between self-sufficiency and community, laissez-faire and welfare, Thatcher and Atlee that has shaped British public life since the 1940s. As Ryan Gilbey points out in *Sight and Sound,* social divisions are inscribed in the very fabric of the shot in *Vera Drake* (2004). Arguably, it seems symptomatic of an American reluctance to abandon the individual that Carney loses the wider sociohistorical moment. You miss a brief discussion of the circumstances in which each film came to be made. I found myself checking back in the (useful) filmography to remind myself when a film appeared. This would have placed Carney's drama of characters rooted and adrift in even firmer soil. Also symptomatic of a discussion departing from the sociohistorical is the occasional use of terms that seem inappropriate. "Yuppie" is used to describe the middle-class campers in *Nuts in May,* but this term was not current in Britain in the mid-70s when the play aired. Use of Americanisms like "mad" (angry) and "front stoop" (porch) seem out of place when discussing an oeuvre that—despite its universal significance for Carney, Quart, and Watson—has been integral to many Britons' sense of themselves since the 1970s. Indeed, despite his acclaim and its cachet, Leigh regrets that *Secrets and Lies* has taken years to reach the audience that *Abigail's Party* reached on BBC1 one night in autumn 1977.

RICHARD ARMSTRONG is an associate tutor affiliated to the British Film Institute. His book, *Understanding Realism,* was published by the BFI in 2005; he is currently collaborating with Leslie Felperin, Tom Charity, and Steven Schneider on *The Rough Guide to Cinema.*

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Garry Watson is Professor of English at the University of Alberta, so it is hardly surprising that his approach tends toward the literary. On the face of it, it seems appropriate to tackle the dialogue-heavy and histrionic flow of a Leigh opus from a literary standpoint. Leigh has a theatrical background, after all. But what is so singular about this director is the whole effect of words, reactions, edits, and sounds in his work. It is not that Professor Watson does not make convincing use of D.H. Lawrence when discussing class in the 1976 television play *Nuts in May*. The novelist was the progeny of working and middle-class parents and so, like Leigh, he straddled both worlds. But, as in Carney and Quart, the discussion of class is too scant for an oeuvre which literally inhales and exhales its consequences. Both books skimp on engagement with the sociohistorical in Leigh, while Watson's often feels like a book on movies for English Literature students—you want more "cinema" from a book entitled *The Cinema of Mike Leigh*. There is already a widespread middle-class British perception that movies are somehow a branch of literature, and Watson's book plays to this misconception. Symptomatic of the bias is his brief examination of the lighting in *Topsy-Turvy* (1999), a film which Watson harps on, possibly because it evokes the "literary" nineteenth-century worlds of Charles Dickens and George Eliot. But by doing so, Watson leaves you wanting more and closer examination of mise-en-scène.

Yet paradoxically, Watson is stronger than Carney and Quart in looking at later Leigh films such as *Secrets and Lies* (1996), *Career Girls* (1997), and *All or Nothing* (2002). *All or*

Nothing gets the kind of close attention you have been wanting all along. Consonant with the feel-good vibe of *Secrets and Lies* and evoking a metaphysical slant to which Watson returns, *All or Nothing* for Watson becomes a tale of modern urban redemption in which the straitened, atomized lives of Leigh's working-class London family become enlivened by rediscovered bonds at the son's hospital bedside. Mobilizing the insights of Andrew Klevan's 2000 book *Disclosure of the Everyday,* Watson shows how Leigh reveals the transformative potential that is always already implicit in quotidian lives. Watson and Carney agree that personal transformation is the motivating drama in most of Leigh's work, bringing with it a kind of secular spirituality rooted in gray detail and bleak moments. Indeed, for Carney, Leigh may rank alongside Carl Theodor Dreyer and Andrei Tarkovsky.

The Carney and Quart book was the first critical study of Leigh's work and every subsequent book on Leigh must negotiate its rigor and insight. I have yet to read a book that better approximates my experience of watching Leigh's films. My one regret is that, apart from the important BBC plays *Nuts in May* and *Abigail's Party* (1977), I have yet to see many of the early works wherein Carney locates the wellspring of Leigh's improvisatory power and vision.

Animating this study is a distinction between two types of Leigh characters that resonates culturally, politically and spiritually across his work. For Carney, there are those like Rupert and Laetitia Boothe-Braine in *High Hopes* (1988), Nicola in *Life Is Sweet* (1990), and Sebastian in *Naked* (1993) who, mired in a mental image of themselves, pigeon-hole others in prejudices, effectively foreclosing on generous and responsive solidarity. Then there are those like Cyril and Shirley in *High Hopes,* Wendy in *Life Is Sweet,* and Louise in *Naked* who have all the foibles, strengths, and self-doubts of their humanity, and are open to the flows of human interaction. Alison Steadman's giggly and affectionate Wendy still epitomizes the principle of social cohesion in Leigh. It is perhaps unsurprising that Steadman and Leigh were married, while the positive response to the density of experience recalls the thick descriptive methodology through which a Leigh film is arrived at. Evoking the Dickensian and Lawrentian views of human sensibility (as Watson points out), Leigh feels that the individual mindset has consequences for the wider culture, and by this light the generous impulse in Wendy and other Leigh characters has been eroded by consumerism and social mobility in postwar Britain. Not as overtly political as Ken Loach, Leigh has nevertheless chronicled the domestic consequences of the decline of the social consensus imagined by writers from Dickens to George Orwell.

One of the most unexpected aspects of Carney and Quart's book is the way it puts mainstream American cinema in perspective by comparing it with Leigh's cinema. With his focus on characters as mannered and tic-ridden "outsides" (as opposed to Hollywood's granting us access to Forrest Gump's inner kindness despite the goofy exterior), Leigh charts that elusive quality, the "ordinary" moment—the everyday drama of interaction they never show in Hollywood because it occurs between the heroics.

In doing so, Carney shows, Leigh pulls apart the Enlightenment model of agency and volition on which most American movies depend. Recalling classes he has taught—he is Director of Film Studies at Boston University—Carney describes how Americans are often perplexed by a cinema in which nothing seems to happen. But Leigh's drama of transformation is rooted in the layered rehearsal of interpersonal dynamics observed with the patience of a European Ozu. Whilst British Leigh commentators have been preoccupied with the writer-director's purchase on the sociological landscape, Carney convinces us that Leigh and Ozu share a feeling for the interplay of performance and mise-en-scène which moves beyond David Bordwell's pioneering Ozu dichotomy between modernism and tradition. Leigh's conception of experience (unlike that of Hollywood) is durational rather than deadlined, heterogeneous rather than hurried. Carney's examination of space and time in Leigh reveals, as Bordwell has done elsewhere, that the mainstream model of experience conceals as much as it reveals.

But to a British reader, Carney's examination of the inward- and outward-regarding Leigh types does not acknowledge the tug of class in these sensibilities. Class is a British fact of life. Part of Leonard Quart's contribution to this book is a chapter offering biographical and cultural orientation to Leigh's work, including a very good grounding of Leigh's cinema in the context of Thatcherism. But I found myself wanting to read Leigh's solipsists and philanthropists into the social fabric as symptoms of the dispute between self-sufficiency and community, laissez-faire and welfare, Thatcher and Atlee that has shaped British public life since the 1940s. As Ryan Gilbey points out in *Sight and Sound,* social divisions are inscribed in the very fabric of the shot in *Vera Drake* (2004). Arguably, it seems symptomatic of an American reluctance to abandon the individual that Carney loses the wider sociohistorical moment. You miss a brief discussion of the circumstances in which each film came to be made. I found myself checking back in the (useful) filmography to remind myself when a film appeared. This would have placed Carney's drama of characters rooted and adrift in even firmer soil. Also symptomatic of a discussion departing from the sociohistorical is the occasional use of terms that seem inappropriate. "Yuppie" is used to describe the middle-class campers in *Nuts in May,* but this term was not current in Britain in the mid-70s when the play aired. Use of Americanisms like "mad" (angry) and "front stoop" (porch) seem out of place when discussing an oeuvre that—despite its universal significance for Carney, Quart, and Watson—has been integral to many Britons' sense of themselves since the 1970s. Indeed, despite his acclaim and its cachet, Leigh regrets that *Secrets and Lies* has taken years to reach the audience that *Abigail's Party* reached on BBC1 one night in autumn 1977.

RICHARD ARMSTRONG is an associate tutor affiliated to the British Film Institute. His book, *Understanding Realism,* was published by the BFI in 2005; he is currently collaborating with Leslie Felperin, Tom Charity, and Steven Schneider on *The Rough Guide to Cinema.*

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Film Structure and the Emotion System

By Greg M. Smith. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003. $55.00. 221 pages.

Film Structure and the Emotion System offers an expanded and more nuanced account of filmic emotions and moods than Greg M. Smith's 1999 essay on the subject.[1] Since 1999, the study of film from a cognitive perspective has established itself as an influential minority tradition within film studies. In this book, Smith overtly compares his own work with that of other key scholars in the field, including Noel Carroll, Ed Tan, and Torben Grodal and Murray Smith. *Film Structure* offers a particularly clear, balanced, and incisive summary of the ideas of these scholars, drawing out their different emphases and assumptions given their location within either cognitive philosophy (Carroll) or cognitive psychology (Tan, Grodal). Indeed, *Film Structure* is accessible to readers who are not familiar with cognitive studies of film, offering an appropriately brief, coherent, knowledgeable overview of the field alongside its innovative arguments.

Smith rightly asserts that "the primary emotive effect of film is to create mood" (42), and argues that films offer invitations to a knowledgeable, responsive viewer seeking particular emotional responses. He notes that his mood-cue approach differs from previous cognitive scholars' work on filmic emotion because it places film style at the center of its analysis, displacing film characters from that position. Smith states his commitment to clear, logical argument and, relatedly, to the introduction of useful new terms with which to discuss filmic emotions and moods. He asserts that film scholars must find a coherent and reasonable theoretical basis for analysis, drawing upon (or at least not contradicting) current cognitive theories in psychology. Smith also proffers a particular understanding of film criticism, advocating respect for films as individual art works, as well as attentiveness to both particular moments and a film's global concerns and emotional movements. In this way, his work potentially enhances the critical evaluation of films—specifically in addressing the question of why some films fail in terms of their management of filmic emotions.

The book is coherent, balanced, self-reflective, and carefully argued, although at times it reads rather like a doctoral thesis, and the appendix critiquing psychoanalytic film theory seems unnecessary at this stage in the development of cognitive film theory—such work has already been persuasively undertaken by other writers, notably Carroll. Smith adds original reflections, especially on Freud's understanding of neurophysiology, but one wonders why this is necessary. Surely cognitive theorists need not spend more time unravelling psychoanalysis—a psychological theory that is both incompatible with and irrelevant to their own project? Similarly, the sections on "feeling for" and "feeling with" a character are a recapitulation of Murray Smith's work on imagining and empathy—though Greg Smith's formulation is simpler and will prove more accessible to non-expert readers.

Disappointingly, Smith does not entirely succeed in shifting his focus from characters to style. His chapter on *Stella Dallas* is very much concerned with the characters and their interactions, and his work on *The Lower Depths,* although it includes some references to music, focuses mostly on character and narrative. Where is the detailed analysis of camera movement, editing, lighting, sound design? In the final chapter, Smith cites some of the appealing features of *Casablanca* that he has been unable to cover; he includes "Michael Curtiz's elegant camera movements" (164). It would have been good to read about how those elegant camera movements played their part in establishing, inflecting, and developing the mood of the film.

Smith generally does not excel at the close analysis of specific moments and scenes. However, he is astute when drawing out "global" movements of mood and emotion across sequences and indeed across an entire film—something that is not often done well by film scholars. In particular, his analyses of particular films that seem to fail in terms of their management of emotion and mood form an original and inspiring contribution to film evaluation. Ascertaining flaws and failures within films is often much harder than singling out their achievements; the mood-cue approach provides a responsive, balanced way to undertake this process.

Vital to Smith's approach is the notion of "emotional inertia"; he uses this to explain why two particular films fail to wholly engage the viewer at an appropriate emotional level. Comparing Jean Renoir's *The Lower Depths* unfavorably with his *A Day in the Country,* Smith writes about the scene in which Pepel is released from jail and makes his way back to the miserable flophouse. This scene has been preceded by a droll "comedy of manners" (133) between Pepel and the baron who discovers the former burgling his home; Pepel's return to the flophouse marks a stark "turn toward the despairing" (134). "Because of emotional inertia [a human tendency towards sustaining a particular emotion], a shift in emotional orientation takes time, and *The Lower Depths* asks us to make this transition without providing the time to do so" (134). Smith similarly makes a bold case that *The Joy Luck Club* is let down by its erratic narrative structure, not because the viewer is confused by the time shifts it employs, but because the film's rapid fluctuations and juxtapositions of mood require an excessive amount of "emotion work" on the part of the viewer.

The mood-cue approach exemplified in *Film Structure* seems particularly well attuned to subtle matters of timing: the way in which a film sustains a holding-off or balancing of mood, and at a more detailed level, the way in which mood shifts within a particular scene or sequence—Smith explores, for example, the way Jim Jarmusch places music around the farewell scene in *Stranger than Paradise.*

Film Structure does provide some new vocabulary for discussing filmic emotion and mood: the notion of the "genre microscript," for instance, is a useful shorthand for considering the way in which a film might utilize a viewer's knowledge about genre to manipulate mood (as in Smith's brief exploration of the balance struck between horror and comedy in *Ghostbusters* [49-51]). Similarly, Smith's attention to "emotion episodes" (high points of emotion) enhances the reader's attention to a film's creation of emotional patterns and em-

phases. But it is perfectly possible, as Smith himself demonstrates, to speak about such moments within older traditions of close textual analysis, without an understanding of cognitive theories.

There is an inevitable gap in the book between the material drawn from cognitive psychology and the close analyses of films rooted in film criticism. Smith correctly asserts that cognitive studies can significantly advance our understanding of filmic mood and emotion. However, once we have accepted the general theories of cognition that relate to mood and emotion, we are still left with very little to help us with the details of particular films—or even particular moods. Cognitive science is not yet advanced enough to match the level of detail at which good film scholars can analyse films: in the end, skills of textual analysis, if exploited carefully and fully, can reveal much more about how a particular film creates, sustains, and develops mood than cognitive psychology can.

Smith advances the study of film moods, and contributes to the vibrant discipline of cognitive film studies. Beyond that, his book offers an original and persuasive approach to film evaluation, and aids film scholars in tackling the global structures of individual films. If there is something lacking in *Film Structure,* it is perhaps an expressiveness, a sense of Smith's own emotional engagement with the films he writes about and the arguments he proffers. His clarity and logic are admirable and persuasive, but to write about moods—of particular moments, of particular scenes—requires perhaps a different sort of vocabulary: an expanded one that allows for greater subtlety and nuance.

NOTES

1. Greg M. Smith, "Local Emotions, Global Moods, and Film Structure," in Carl Plantinga and Greg M. Smith, eds., *Passionate Views: Film, Cognition and Emotion* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 103-26.

SARAH CARDWELL is Lecturer in Film and Television Studies, University of Kent, England, and the author of *Adaptation Revisited: Television and the Classic Novel* (Manchester University Press, 2002) and *Andrew Davies* (Manchester University Press, 2005). She is currently completing *Time,* a book about filmic temporality.

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The Girl From God's Country: Nell Shipman and the Silent Cinema

By Kay Armatage. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. $63.00 cloth; $32.95 paper. 428 pages.

I first came across the name of Nell Shipman in the early 1980s. At the time, the only information I could find on her, besides the fact that she was an independent filmmaker, was that she gave Joseph Walker his start as a cinematographer on the films she did at Priest Lake, Utah, between 1922 and 1924. This is true, and Walker did go on to have a prominent career in Hollywood, working with such directors as Frank Capra and Howard Hawks. But Shipman deserves recognition on her own and at last she has it through Kay Armatage's painstakingly and lovingly researched book.

Armatage first encountered her subject at the "Woman and Film: International Festival" in Toronto in 1973 where *Back to God's Country* (1919), written, directed, and starring Nell Shipman, was screened. However, as she explains in the introduction, with her literary background Armatage was, at this time, more comfortable working in the emerging area of feminist theory. Doing historical research on a largely unknown figure is an enormously time-consuming and patient process, and it has taken Armatage 30 years to bring this project to fruition.

The idea that active, independent, and courageous women filmmakers were uncommon during the silent era is a misconception that is rapidly evaporating with the appearance of such books as Gwendolyn Foster's *Women Filmmakers: An International Bio-Critical Dictionary* (1995), Anthony Slide's book on Lois Weber (1996), Cari Beauchamp's on Frances Marion (1997), KINO's video collection *First Ladies: Early Women Filmmakers,* and now Armatage's important contribution on Nell Shipman. Shipman was not a tragic genius; although her life in many ways was tragic, she was not ahead of her time. Her independence, tough spirit, and creative energy seem quite remarkable, yet she did not make important films that contributed to the growth of an industry. She worked within the conventions of generic narrative cinema, with melodramatic plots and happy endings where the heterosexual couple becomes a family. Her films differ from some of her contemporaries, such as Lois Weber, in that the woman drives the plot, her heroism saves the day, and the man is vulnerable. But more significant than the female-driven melodramatic storylines are the scenes of the solitary woman braving the wilderness. Armatage writes, "In these beautiful shots, Shipman's professionalism, love of nature, and cinematic aesthetic are in full evidence" (246). The book is handsomely illustrated with numerous photographs of Shipman: with animals (her trademark) in the wilderness; with the bear, Brownie, with whom she formed a special relationship; and on location during the harsh winters at Priest Lake, Utah.

If Shipman's story is so ordinary and her films merely popular melodrama, why is she worth studying? Armatage gives two powerful reasons: because we do not know enough about these early female pioneers, and because Shipman's work in popular genres "welcomes a variety of methods of reading and unfolds issues of modernity, generic convention, and cinematic practice" (26). It is this second reason that defines the unique tone of the book—its "variety of methods," or what seems to me is its variety of voices. We have Shipman's own voice that Armatage gives us in a chapter devoted to her letters from 1939; we have Armatage's theoretical feminist voice that emerges most strongly in the readings she gives of the films; we have Armatage's voice of historical scholarship; and finally, we have the author's very personal voice. These voices do not always blend, but they do illustrate "a variety of methods of reading."

Shipman was born in Canada in 1892. A biographical timeline in the book is very useful, along with her known

phases. But it is perfectly possible, as Smith himself demonstrates, to speak about such moments within older traditions of close textual analysis, without an understanding of cognitive theories.

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Shipman was born in Canada in 1892. A biographical timeline in the book is very useful, along with her known

filmography. She started her career as an actress, and in 1912 she also wrote her first movie. A starring role in *God's Country and the Woman* (1916) led to her moniker as "the girl from God's country" (the subtitle of Armatage's book), with a reputation for driving sled dogs, canoeing, snowshoeing, and relating to animals. In 1921 she formed Nell Shipman Productions, for which she produced, wrote, directed, and starred until 1924. Three feature films, *Back to God's Country* (1919), *Something New* (1920), and *The Grub-Stake* (1923) survive from this period, along with a recently discovered fragment of a sound film from 1947, *The Story of Mr. Hobbs,* also known as *The Clam-Digger's Daughter.* There are also three short films on video in the Nell Shipman Archive in the Special Collections Department of Boise State University. These are the works to which Armatage devotes the central chapters of her book.

Armatage uses basic screenplay structure (she quotes Shipman here), to plan her organization. First, get your character up in a tree, which she does in chapters 1 and 2, surveying the available scholarship on women filmmakers of the silent era and situating Shipman in this context; second, throw stones at her, which constitutes the discussion of her films in chapters 3 through 7; and finally, get her down, which she does in the last two chapters, one that is composed largely of a selection of Shipman's letters from 1939, and finally, her conclusion. Although this is a solid structure, the book itself seems to be full of long digressions that are not always germane to its central subject. Some of these include a history of early dog films, feminism and animal rights, ecofeminism, women and cars, miscegenation and eugenics, the representation of Native Americans in silent film, and a comparison of Canadian and Australian cinemas. Thematically, these all relate to Shipman, but sometimes I found, to quote Armatage in another context, that "Nell is lost in a strange limbo" (21), so that her body of work is obscured in the theoretical musings woven together throughout the pages.

As a theoretician, Armatage can lapse into jargon. She mentions that initially she planned the book as a reading of Shipman's films in light of current theoretical issues, and although she says that this early intention was "mistaken," the book still contains psychoanalytic readings and studies in melodrama that in our "post-theory" world may seem somewhat strained. Armatage admits that the psychoanalytic model that has come down to us from Mulvey is dated, yet she still finds it useful, and with Shipman's films as illustration, she does make a cogent argument that "the aesthetic of melodrama is more porous and malleable than usually thought, and much less locked into the prison-house of patriarchal ideology than many feminist critics have argued" (240).

As an historical scholar, Armatage's prose is sometimes stiff. This is especially noticeable in chapter 7, "Bits and Pieces," where she writes extensively on the history of the use of animals in silent film and relies heavily on other people's research. Consequently, she overuses a clumsy citation style that is not apparent in the book's other nine chapters.

Her most fluid, eloquent writing occurs when she gets personal, especially in chapter 6, on *The Grub-Stake.* It is here she introduces the concept of haptic visuality to read this particular film, although I suspect it applies to all of Shipman's work and indeed, to the experience of researching her. To respond to an image in terms of its haptic visuality is to respond to its surface textures, its feel. Armatage writes about the sense of Shipman's solitary body, seen in the depths of the wilderness, the physical reality of a lustrous image. The photographs reproduced in the book cannot do it justice, but when Armatage describes the feel of Shipman's letters, the touch of the holes produced in the paper by the typing of periods, what she calls the "erotics" of archival research comes to life. Computers and facsimiles cannot reproduce the actual sense of "Shipman's lived body . . . mediated through a machine"—the Underwood typewriter on which she wrote hundreds of letters, as well as screenplays, novels, and articles. The holes and the half-raised capital letters—indicating she was writing quickly and did not push the shift key all the way down—allow Armatage to connect with Shipman's body, "from her fingers to the fingers of the researcher" (256).

Chapter 8 gives us the texts of a number of Shipman's letters from 1939. She is living in New York and has not made a film since 1924, but she is filled with ideas and pedaling projects, even some for the new medium of television. Although often hit with deep bouts of depression, her letters to her son, Barry, in California, are endlessly optimistic. Her grit and determination in the face of debt and extreme poverty—sometimes without food or clothing—are extraordinary. Armatage does not comment on these letters, but astutely lets Shipman speak for herself, observing only that "The passionate commitment to the projects, the world of filmmaking, and the business of production are not delusional: this is her life" (310).

And it is Shipman's working life that Armatage has brought to us. This is, she tells us, what a researcher longs for: to bring the subject back to life, like the holes in the paper that evoke not only absence but also presence. The book is *not* a biography; Armatage is adamant about this. "I determined to devote myself to the work—rather than the lives—of women creators" (23). So in *The Girl From God's Country* there is very little discussion of Shipman's marriages, lovers, twin children (who are mentioned only in passing as living with one of her ex-husbands), although son Barry does play a prominent role, but only because he was an important part of her professional career and Armatage interviewed him in California before his death in 1994. Right up until her death in 1970, Shipman was envisioning projects, and she completed the first volume of her memoir, *The Silent Screen and My Talking Heart,* not published until 1987.

The real kicker in this fascinating book comes at the end. It is a response to Shipman's request for assistance from the Motion Picture Relief Fund: "With the exception of 1929, when you wrote 'Wings in the Dark' . . . we cannot see where you had any further association with the motion picture industry. . . . We regret that you do not meet our eligibility requirements" (347). Armatage, however, deliberately does not leave us with this note of erasure—that would not be characteristic of her subject. She reiterates that Shipman was not extraordinary; her life and work merely echo what women do today in taking on new technology and the multifaceted responsibilities of careers, relationships, and family.

But Armatage does not convince me of Shipman's ordinariness. Nell Shipman emerges from this book as quite extraordinary, with a strong sense of self and an undying creative energy. Unfortunately, she is also a model of what happened to such women in an industry that came to be dominated by men. A personal project for Armatage, *The Girl From God's Country* begins with the quiet statement that Shipman "seems a lot like me" (26), and ends simply: "Nell Shipman touches me" (351). It is a fitting conclusion.

JOANNA E. RAPF is Professor of English and Film & Video Studies at the University of Oklahoma.

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Hal Wallis: Producer to the Stars.

By Bernard F. Dick. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2004. $35.00. 277 pages.

Hal B. Wallis was an important and oddly singular Hollywood producer, one of the very few to enjoy success both as a studio production chief and as an independent producer, and also to survive the postwar collapse of the studio system. In terms of sheer longevity, Wallis's career was astounding, spanning a full half-century from 1925 to 1975. His output was equally impressive; in successive stints at Warner Bros., Paramount, and Universal, Wallis had a hand in the making of nearly 200 films, including a few such as *Casablanca* (1943) that were among Hollywood's best. Despite these accomplishments, however, Wallis's name rarely is included among the pantheon of studio production bosses like Darryl Zanuck and Irving Thalberg, nor among the somewhat longer list of "major independent producers" like David Selznick, Sam Goldwyn, Walt Disney, Walter Wanger, Sam Spiegel, and Stanley Kramer.

The outspoken intent of Bernard F. Dick's *Hal Wallis: Producer to the Stars* is to correct that oversight. Dick hopes not only to tell the story of Wallis's life in more depth and detail than has been done previously—by Wallis himself in his 1980 autobiography, *Starmaker,* co-written with Charles Higham—but also to build a case for Wallis "as one of the industry's greatest producers, who was every bit the equal of Irving Thalberg and Darryl Zanuck" (10). The results are mixed at best, due both to Dick's brisk and superficial treatment and to the fact that he is trying to make a case that, in the end, simply doesn't add up.

Relying heavily on Wallis's personal papers as well as studio archives, Dick does manage to do a masterful job of charting Wallis's career and examining his roles as production executive and independent producer. This is an engaging and illuminating narrative in and of itself, since Wallis was vitally involved in the making of so many classic films and interacted with so many key Hollywood figures. Moreover, the trajectory of Wallis's own career provides a fascinating gauge for the history of the movie industry itself.

Wallis started as a theater manager in Los Angeles and in 1925, at age 27, he joined the up-and-coming Warner Bros. as publicity director. He quickly climbed to second-in-command under the bantam genius Darryl Zanuck, and then took charge of production himself when Zanuck bolted Warner Bros. in 1933 to create Twentieth Century Pictures, an independent company that soon merged with Fox. After Thalberg's death in 1936, Zanuck and Wallis were Hollywood's two top studio production heads. In fact, they were the first recipients of the Academy's Thalberg Award—in effect, the Oscar for best producer—which Zanuck won in 1937 and Wallis in 1938, the year Warners released *Jezebel, Angels with Dirty Faces,* and *The Adventures of Robin Hood.*

Wallis began the transition to independent producer while still at Warner Bros., signing a new contract in 1942 that made him executive producer of just a handful of top pictures per year. Among the first of these was *Casablanca*, which was a watershed for Wallis in many respects. For one thing, it marked the most significant creative contribution of his entire career, when he came up with the inspired closing line—Bogart's now legendary quip, "Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship." More importantly, *Casablanca* won the Oscar for Best Picture, and earned Wallis a second Thalberg Award; it also caused a rift with Jack Warner that resulted in Wallis's jumping to Paramount, where for the next quarter-century he functioned as an "in-house independent" producer, developing his own projects with studio financing and distribution.

Dick devotes roughly the first third of *Hal Wallis* to his tenure at Warners, which is understandable enough since this ground has been traversed elsewhere—including Rudy Behlmer's excellent *Inside Warner Brothers* and Nick Roddick's underrated *A New Deal in Entertainment.* The rest of the book focuses on Wallis's three decades as an in-house independent at Paramount (1945-70) and Universal (1969-75). This is largely uncharted territory, and thus reason enough to peruse Dick's biography, although his treatment follows much the same anecdotal, elliptical, and star-obsessed pattern as Wallis's own autobiography. With chapter titles like "Morning Star," "Interstellar Spaces," and "The Wallis Galaxy," Dick traces Wallis's knack for spotting movie-star potential and launching careers, including those of such top postwar talent as Kirk Douglas, Burt Lancaster, Charlton Heston, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, Shirley MacLaine, Shirley Booth, and Elvis Presley. Most were established stars in other fields whose screen prospects were accurately assessed and exploited by Wallis—but rarely beyond one or two pictures. Unlike the contract stars at Warners, there were no compelling reasons for these freelance stars to work more than once with Wallis, and few of them did. Time and again, Dick describes "Wallis discoveries" whose "best performances were not in Wallis films" (127). He describes MacLaine, for instance, as "another Wallis disappointment" who "like so many of Wallis's protégés made her best films elsewhere" (136). But Dick has no explanation for this recurring pattern, at least in terms that might apply to Wallis.

The exceptions to this pattern of desertion, notably Martin and Lewis and "pop star" Elvis Presley, were equally disappointing. Their films trace a dismal downward cycle that Dick scarcely regards as Wallis's responsibility, and that he analyzes in remarkably superficial terms. Elvis's case, for

But Armatage does not convince me of Shipman's ordinariness. Nell Shipman emerges from this book as quite extraordinary, with a strong sense of self and an undying creative energy. Unfortunately, she is also a model of what happened to such women in an industry that came to be dominated by men. A personal project for Armatage, *The Girl From God's Country* begins with the quiet statement that Shipman "seems a lot like me" (26), and ends simply: "Nell Shipman touches me" (351). It is a fitting conclusion.

JOANNA E. RAPF is Professor of English and Film & Video Studies at the University of Oklahoma.

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By Bernard F. Dick. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2004. $35.00. 277 pages.

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example, elicits the following assessment: "Innocence gave way to experience, and sensuousness to sleaze. The pace at which Elvis kept making movies—fifteen between 1965 and 1969—indicated that he had become a cash cow with limited milk" (167). This certainly involved the "blatant exploitation" of Presley, writes Dick, but the "culprit" was not Wallis but Elvis's manager, Colonel Tom Parker. Dick is equally superficial and similarly forgiving in his assessment of the recurring rifts between Wallis and his various long-time associates. From Jack Warner onward, Wallis quarreled and then split with one close associate after another, which Dick tends to dismiss as the cost of doing business in Hollywood, and to wave off via some variation on that last line from *Casablanca.*

Wallis's only notable successes in his later years were throwbacks: the British costume dramas *Becket* (1964), *Anne of a Thousand Days* (1969), and *Mary Queen of Scots* (1971); and two John Wayne Westerns, *True Grit* (1969) and *Rooster Cogburn* (1975). The latter film was Wallis's last, aptly enough, and working with Wayne and Katharine Hepburn was one of the few pleasant experiences for the aging producer, who by then was woefully out of his element. It was released by Universal the same year that another team of in-house independents, Richard Zanuck (son of Darryl) and David Brown, produced *Jaws,* the film that emphatically announced the end of the Old Hollywood and the onslaught of the New.

Dick does not mention *Jaws,* remarkably enough, nor does he gauge Wallis's work in the context of the "larger" industry developments at the time. This is a problem throughout the biography, which focuses so closely—and so sympathetically—on its subject that the industry at large is barely glimpsed. Why, one might wonder, did Wallis decide to "go independent" after leaving Warners, rather than take a production executive position at another studio? Why did Wallis decide to develop stars rather than directors in the postwar era, and why did freelance stars exert so much power? The answers involve the fundamental transformation of Hollywood in the 1940s and beyond, which Wallis managed to survive but never to master, as he had once mastered the studio system. Dick never mentions the war-related changes to the federal tax codes, for instance, which induced stars and top filmmakers to go freelance. He mentions the government's antitrust suit in passing, but incorrectly dates the filing as 1940 (the *Paramount* case was filed in July 1938), and doesn't mention the devastating outcome of the case until long after the fact, as an aside in a discussion of Presley's later films.

The problems here are endemic to Hollywood biographies, especially those involving someone like Wallis, whose individual agency was dictated and constrained by other forces, and who had no real claim to authorship of either films or corporations. Dick argues throughout that Wallis belongs in the producer's pantheon along with Thalberg, Goldwyn, Selznick, and Zanuck, and in fact he ends the book by comparing Wallis (favorably) with each of them. He suggests finally that the closest comparison was to Zanuck, which is true enough regarding Wallis's early career. He was in his element as a studio production chief, and the rest of his career was colorful enough, but it never came close to what he produced at Warner Bros. But even then, Wallis's decade at Warners, where he was an effective studio functionary, scarcely matches Zanuck's own run at Warners and then at Twentieth Century Fox, where he was studio boss and consummate authority for three decades. Wallis certainly earned those two Thalberg Awards, one as a studio production chief and the other as an executive producer. But he was at his best as a company man, and the fact is that his greatest achievements were authored by Warner Bros.

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Love Rules: Silent Hollywood and the Rise of the Managerial Class

By Mark Garrett Cooper. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. $59.95 cloth; 19.95 paper. 279 pages.

In *Love Rules: Silent Hollywood and the Rise of the Managerial Class,* Mark Garrett Cooper takes a number of audacious positions about the role of the virtually omnipresent love story in the American media. On occasion, this book seems to lose focus on whether it is discussing the love story solely in terms of American silent film or in terms of American film in general. But regardless of its urge to wander, *Love Rules* is an engaging and provocative study that thoroughly accomplishes one of the major goals of criticism: it leads the reader to explore new possibilities in thinking about old problems.

Cooper is on the track of nothing less than the interrelationship among narrative closure, the function of the couple in Hollywood fantasy, and the logistics of how ideology is embedded into Hollywood entertainment. In broad terms, Cooper contends that the ultimate union of the silent cinema's central couple at closure represents a mediation of secure and insecure spaces within the filmic frame that privileges whiteness and heterosexuality. There is nothing revolutionary in reading this kind of ideology into Hollywood productions, but Cooper makes it new by basing his argument on spatial analyses rather than on shot-reverse-shot editing and the male gaze. He then contends that the reassuring regime of the visible transformed by the "right" couple implies a disembodied authority behind the scenes, a managerial class based on a cult of expertise whose authority both validates the centrality of the designated couple and is validated by it. Cooper is interested in what he sees as the simultaneous genesis of Hollywood feature films and social engineering by self-proclaimed objective information gatherers, a professional class that he believes constructed a public for mass entertainment quite different from the public that reads books, a public that only became conceivable with the technology of the mass media. In linking the erotic attractions of the necessary couple with a culture of professional information managers, Cooper outlines a Big Brother

example, elicits the following assessment: "Innocence gave way to experience, and sensuousness to sleaze. The pace at which Elvis kept making movies—fifteen between 1965 and 1969—indicated that he had become a cash cow with limited milk" (167). This certainly involved the "blatant exploitation" of Presley, writes Dick, but the "culprit" was not Wallis but Elvis's manager, Colonel Tom Parker. Dick is equally superficial and similarly forgiving in his assessment of the recurring rifts between Wallis and his various long-time associates. From Jack Warner onward, Wallis quarreled and then split with one close associate after another, which Dick tends to dismiss as the cost of doing business in Hollywood, and to wave off via some variation on that last line from *Casablanca.*

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scenario. His conclusions, more unsettling than previous critiques of Hollywood couples as purveyors of sexism and racism such as we find in Virginia Wright Wexman's *Creating the Couple,* cast a cold eye indeed, not only asserting dark truths about the "magic" of the screen couple, but also assessing its despairing implications for what the twentieth-century means by "the public."

In speaking of the function of the onscreen couple, Cooper cleaves to a majority view that Hollywood employs sexual tension to reproduce patriarchal ideology. However, he rejects the methodology for probing gendered aspects of film that grew grew out of Laura Mulvey's seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," and opts for a methodology based on spatial mapping and transformation: ". . . the love story does not happen *in* space as much as *to* space" (12). Placing his emphasis on the continuity editing convention of the eyeline match, Cooper works through a thesis that the mutual gaze of the designated couple is fully realized in a complete eyeline match at the end of the film, when the couple finally gazes eye into eye. It was at this point that Hollywood "made it appear self-evident that the future stability of the nation depended on the safety and happiness of the white man and the white woman" (13).

In making his point, Cooper refers to numerous silent classics, including *Why Change Your Wife?, The Big Parade, The Wind,* and *Life of an American Fireman,* to demonstrate his ideas about how much of the visual work of the film establishes the difference between safe and unsafe spaces and creates desire for the one unitive sanctuary that will establish white heterosexuality as the imprimatur of national security. But he leans most heavily on *The Birth of a Nation* to demonstrate how he reads gender and race into the spatial organization of silent film. Cooper focuses extensively on the post-Civil War scene in which Gus, a former slave, pursues Flora, the virginal, white Little Sister. In speaking of the way Griffith divides the frame with a fence that separates Flora from Gus, Cooper notes that "By means of lighting and careful arrangement of mise-en-scène, the film represents the sides of the fence . . . as incompatible kinds of spaces. When Gus finally enters the frame with Little Sister, he transgresses a boundary that seemed necessary and proper, if insufficient" (55). In demonizing Gus's intrusion into Flora's white space, the film paves the way for the white heterosexual couple to establish the right space of desire at the end of the film. Cooper tells us that *Birth of a Nation* thus performs the essential Hollywood ritual of not only getting rid of the villains, but also enforcing a normative structuring of the visual field which connotes a stable America. This is, he claims, what the ride of the Klan at the end of the film achieves when it patrols "a secure space in which [the approved form of] love can endure" (57. Brackets mine).

Diagraming the play between unsafe (deviant) areas and one secure (naturalized) space as the dynamic of the mating dance of the white, heterosexual couple is a provocative way of viewing how silent Hollywood mobilized mass audiences as part of a patriarchal America. Cooper's analyses issue an exuberant challenge to the reader to sift through familiar silent and sound films with this thought in mind, with the inevitable result that while some films fit the theory neatly, it yields little of interest in others. Nevertheless, Cooper seems to have hit upon a good heuristic device, an achievement that should not be underestimated, for his model of spatial analyses may serve equally well for films in which the triumphal unification of spaces does take place as for films in which it does not. For example, I am struck by how Cooper's critical vocabulary seems to open up new ways of understanding *The Graduate* (1967), which is famous for its lack of eyeline match at closure. Using Cooper's idea, it is possible to understand the separate, bewildered glances of the young couple in the final frames as precisely what defines the counter-cultural impact of a film that, without such a terminus, could have been seen as one more version of the runaway bride romantic comedy. There is something very satisfying in contemplating the peculiarly powerful impact of that final image of the stunned confusion of that white, heterosexual couple as an assertion that America can no longer contain the possibility of a safe ideological space.

However, Cooper then moves onto what some readers may consider shakier ground when, assuming that his spatial methodology is applicable wholesale to couples in Hollywood silent film, he stands on that concept to explain how the spatial reproduction of patriarchal ideology is inextricably linked to the rise of the managerial class. If I understand him correctly, Cooper asserts that an essential aspect of the approach to visual narrative that Hollywood was developing during its silent period is that it contained a tacit implication that no individual character was capable of visualizing all the diverse spaces the film contained before the resolution to the one space unified around the designated couple. Each *embodied* character is presented such that he or she is capable of comprehending only his or her particular *embodied* space. Thus in mapping the numerous spaces for the audience, silent film ipso facto implied a *disembodied* intelligence, a necessary and invisible but authoritative presence which alone could contain knowledge of the juxtaposed spaces and thus of the appropriateness of their final reduction to one "right" space in the crucial moment of closure. The significance Cooper finds in his "disembodied narrator" is that he sees it as part of a general social phenomenon that constructed a twentieth-century American public bereft of the nineteenth-century, modern bourgeois understanding of the public sphere as a contract entered into by private individuals.

In probing the significance of the new constitution of the "public" for silent film, Cooper is most indebted to a famous running dialogue between Walter Lippmann and John Dewey that took place between 1922 and 1927. In a series of interchanges through books and book reviews, these two philosophers debated the ramifications of living in a country in which thought was defined by information managers. Cooper gives an excellent, exhaustive history of this interchange, which brings to a complete halt all consideration of the films of the silent era—a hiatus that almost derails the book's project as it seeks to clarify the critic's conceptual foundations. Finally, moving back toward the films themselves, Cooper arrives at his ultimate conclusion that the

emotional gratifications gained by the audience from the united couple, which became available to them as they submitted to the vision of space held by some unseen "expert" perspective, helped to solidify the power base of the expert information managers rising to prominence in American society. Love rules because the spatial representation of fantasies of love, established during the silent film era, validated the need for a class of experts to put together all the disparate aspects of American lives that ordinary individuals were incapable of seeing as a whole.

It is good to see more serious, theoretical discussion of the function of the couple in the movies. Only three such book-length studies precede Cooper's: Virginia Wright Wexman's book, mentioned above; *Unlikely Couples: Movie Romance as Social Criticism,* by Thomas Wartenberg; and mine, *Screen Couple Chemistry: The Power of 2*. The aggregate of these discussions seems to point toward an interesting conversation in the making among those critics who understand screen couples as potential instruments for resistance against ideology and those who assume that they inevitably facilitate indoctrination. Cooper's book falls into the second category: it is the first to explore what may be the foundations of Hollywood conventions of couple representation in silent film, and it gives us much to think about. I am hesitant about Cooper's very large theoretical leaps, but then, even though we all make them, we are generally suspicious of those made by others. I am less tentatively wary of discussions that speak of "the couple" as an amorphous blob, as if there were no significant distinctions to be made among types of designated couples that appear in Hollywood movies. My research on the subject strongly suggests to me that we run the risk of pursuing theory fatally divorced from screen fact if we do not take into account the pronounced variations in types of couples on screen. However, I think Cooper's concentration on eyeline match and his sensitivity to where a screen couple is located spatially may prove quite productive. I am eager to re-examine in these terms the couples of which I speak in my book.

MARTHA P. NOCHIMSON is the author of *The Passion of David Lynch: Wild at Heart in Hollywood* and *Screen Couple Chemistry: The Power of 2*. She is now completing a study of gangster movies in Hollywood and Hong Kong.

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The New German Cinema: Music, History, and the Matter of Style

By Caryl Flinn. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004. $65.00 cloth; $19.95 paper. 323 pages.

It was with great anticipation that I approached Caryl Flinn's new book, *The New German Cinema: Music, History, and the Matter of Style.* The academic field of film music is a small but ever-growing group of scholars from a variety of disciplines, and I write this review as a member of a community to which Flinn has contributed so importantly in the past. Her turn to the music of New German Cinema, a notoriously underscrutinized element of the movement, is very welcome indeed. I was not disappointed. Flinn's book is illuminating on its central focus, music, and its relationship to history and style. It is also rich in insights about a number of topics related to New German Cinema as well as to broader concerns of film theory and criticism: the relationship of film to the representation of history; the impact of trauma on memory and filmic representation of memory; the function and impact of style; and the exploration of modernism, postmodernism, camp, and kitsch as stylistic systems. As the preceding list indicates, Flinn's work crosses a number of disciplinary borders and exploits film studies, queer theory, feminist theory, critical musicology, trauma studies, and cultural studies.

The central argument of Flinn's book is that music plays a key role in New German Cinema's representation of history and memory, a role that has been occluded in most studies of the movement. Flinn argues, compellingly, that music, like style itself, is one of the raw materials of a film's "surface," capable of materializing history and experience (268). Music thus constitutes a key to understanding the ways in which filmmakers have commented upon and/or critiqued the past. Flinn, however, paints her subject with a very fine brush indeed. Even her large, overarching arguments are nuanced. Cautions Flinn: music and style "do not so much depict the past as offer evidence of it," functioning as "memory fragments, partial leftovers that can point to something but can never be commensurate with it" (269). Trauma disturbs representation, and it is the gaps and displacements between experience and representation that New German Cinema exposes. Music proves one of the most provocative of vehicles to call into question the very notion of history.

Flinn's introduction, "Strategies of Remembrance," foregrounds the work of style as a constituent feature of all forms of representation, including history and memory. Thus style becomes a crucial element in New German Cinema with its commitment to engaging with the past. "Style in the New German Cinema thus worked less to *serve* a story than to be *part* of it" (7). Theorizing the musical score as an element of style, Flinn posits that "music and other aspects of film style work as much as the image to address notions of history, loss, and identity" (12). The composers of New German Cinema attempted to de-romanticize their subjects; Flinn details the ways in which they did so, including their resistance to classical scoring principles such as the use of music to encode emotions, mood, or narrative content. Composers instead created the distinctive composite score which "pillaged freely from existing music, sometimes mixing it with originally scored music, creating odd cultural and historical hybrids" (2). Musical quotations (from Bach to Wagner to the Beatles and everything inbetween) are exaggerated, skewed, deliberately clichéd; music is thus detached from its originary source and purpose and yanked into new and disquieting relationships with the image, forcing viewers into a critical awareness of the music and prompting questions about history and memory. As such, the musical score both mirrors and confirms the movement's distrust of the very notion of authenticity.

The book is organized very effectively around different stylistic "strategies of remembrance" for confronting the past:

emotional gratifications gained by the audience from the united couple, which became available to them as they submitted to the vision of space held by some unseen "expert" perspective, helped to solidify the power base of the expert information managers rising to prominence in American society. Love rules because the spatial representation of fantasies of love, established during the silent film era, validated the need for a class of experts to put together all the disparate aspects of American lives that ordinary individuals were incapable of seeing as a whole.

It is good to see more serious, theoretical discussion of the function of the couple in the movies. Only three such book-length studies precede Cooper's: Virginia Wright Wexman's book, mentioned above; *Unlikely Couples: Movie Romance as Social Criticism,* by Thomas Wartenberg; and mine, *Screen Couple Chemistry: The Power of 2*. The aggregate of these discussions seems to point toward an interesting conversation in the making among those critics who understand screen couples as potential instruments for resistance against ideology and those who assume that they inevitably facilitate indoctrination. Cooper's book falls into the second category: it is the first to explore what may be the foundations of Hollywood conventions of couple representation in silent film, and it gives us much to think about. I am hesitant about Cooper's very large theoretical leaps, but then, even though we all make them, we are generally suspicious of those made by others. I am less tentatively wary of discussions that speak of "the couple" as an amorphous blob, as if there were no significant distinctions to be made among types of designated couples that appear in Hollywood movies. My research on the subject strongly suggests to me that we run the risk of pursuing theory fatally divorced from screen fact if we do not take into account the pronounced variations in types of couples on screen. However, I think Cooper's concentration on eyeline match and his sensitivity to where a screen couple is located spatially may prove quite productive. I am eager to re-examine in these terms the couples of which I speak in my book.

MARTHA P. NOCHIMSON is the author of *The Passion of David Lynch: Wild at Heart in Hollywood* and *Screen Couple Chemistry: The Power of 2*. She is now completing a study of gangster movies in Hollywood and Hong Kong.

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The New German Cinema: Music, History, and the Matter of Style

By Caryl Flinn. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004. $65.00 cloth; $19.95 paper. 323 pages.

It was with great anticipation that I approached Caryl Flinn's new book, *The New German Cinema: Music, History, and the Matter of Style.* The academic field of film music is a small but ever-growing group of scholars from a variety of disciplines, and I write this review as a member of a community to which Flinn has contributed so importantly in the past. Her turn to the music of New German Cinema, a notoriously underscrutinized element of the movement, is very welcome indeed. I was not disappointed. Flinn's book is illuminating on its central focus, music, and its relationship to history and style. It is also rich in insights about a number of topics related to New German Cinema as well as to broader concerns of film theory and criticism: the relationship of film to the representation of history; the impact of trauma on memory and filmic representation of memory; the function and impact of style; and the exploration of modernism, postmodernism, camp, and kitsch as stylistic systems. As the preceding list indicates, Flinn's work crosses a number of disciplinary borders and exploits film studies, queer theory, feminist theory, critical musicology, trauma studies, and cultural studies.

The central argument of Flinn's book is that music plays a key role in New German Cinema's representation of history and memory, a role that has been occluded in most studies of the movement. Flinn argues, compellingly, that music, like style itself, is one of the raw materials of a film's "surface," capable of materializing history and experience (268). Music thus constitutes a key to understanding the ways in which filmmakers have commented upon and/or critiqued the past. Flinn, however, paints her subject with a very fine brush indeed. Even her large, overarching arguments are nuanced. Cautions Flinn: music and style "do not so much depict the past as offer evidence of it," functioning as "memory fragments, partial leftovers that can point to something but can never be commensurate with it" (269). Trauma disturbs representation, and it is the gaps and displacements between experience and representation that New German Cinema exposes. Music proves one of the most provocative of vehicles to call into question the very notion of history.

Flinn's introduction, "Strategies of Remembrance," foregrounds the work of style as a constituent feature of all forms of representation, including history and memory. Thus style becomes a crucial element in New German Cinema with its commitment to engaging with the past. "Style in the New German Cinema thus worked less to *serve* a story than to be *part* of it" (7). Theorizing the musical score as an element of style, Flinn posits that "music and other aspects of film style work as much as the image to address notions of history, loss, and identity" (12). The composers of New German Cinema attempted to de-romanticize their subjects; Flinn details the ways in which they did so, including their resistance to classical scoring principles such as the use of music to encode emotions, mood, or narrative content. Composers instead created the distinctive composite score which "pillaged freely from existing music, sometimes mixing it with originally scored music, creating odd cultural and historical hybrids" (2). Musical quotations (from Bach to Wagner to the Beatles and everything inbetween) are exaggerated, skewed, deliberately clichéd; music is thus detached from its originary source and purpose and yanked into new and disquieting relationships with the image, forcing viewers into a critical awareness of the music and prompting questions about history and memory. As such, the musical score both mirrors and confirms the movement's distrust of the very notion of authenticity.

The book is organized very effectively around different stylistic "strategies of remembrance" for confronting the past:

Part I treats melodrama and modernism; Part II, the "materials of history"; and Part III, camp and kitsch. Each of these parts is fairly self-contained and it is quite possible to read selectively without feeling lost. Be forewarned, however: Flinn's writing is not always easy. It can be dense (but not obfuscating) and demanding (but not unrewarding).

What is so exciting to me about Flinn's work is not only the gap she addresses in the history, theory, and criticism of New German Cinema, but the striking new contexts she provides for thinking about film music in particular and music in general. Her analysis of composer Peer Raben's scores, for instance, begins with Raben's premise that film music "should function as a series of 'shocks'" (71). *The Marriage of Maria Braun* is filled with such jolts, like the use of a Nazi-era popular song played on xylophones and glockenspiels. By deliberately invoking children and innocence, Raben shocks the audience, wrenching the song out of familiar and conventional contexts. But Flinn also contextualizes Raben's Music-Shock in the larger terms of European modernism, drawing striking comparisons between Raben and Brecht, Weill, Eisler, and Eisenstein, and demonstrating the ways in which Raben reworks the aesthetic past of the twentieth century.

Flinn's analysis of melodrama not only offers cogent analysis of the ways in which filmmakers of New German Cinema used music in the genre, but also questions the psychoanalytic framework of melodrama developed by film theorists in the 80s. (Flinn connects melodrama's exploitation of excess to melancholia instead of hysteria.) In a chapter on Kluge's *The Power of Emotion,* Flinn offers us not only a careful and compelling reading of how music is used in the film (interrupted arias, fragmented operatic performances, and ironic voice-over commentary are but a few of the strategies Kluge employs to "disable" [138] conventional forms such as narrative and history), but also an illuminating look at nineteenth-century tragic opera and its class and gender biases. Flinn's work on Treut, Ottinger, and von Praunheim opens new vistas on music and sexuality; her work on Schroeter, on the nature of camp and kitsch and their relationship to history.

In fact, I found Flinn's work on camp and kitsch among the most exhilarating portions of the book. Arguing that queerness, to some extent, unleashes the body from the "(often cliched) forces of nation and sexual normativity" (21), Flinn reconceptualizes strategies such as camp and kitsch as processes that "treat the body as a divided site of different identities (and desires) with a fractured German identity" (21). Often dismissed as "degraded, superficial, or inappropriate," camp and—even more so—kitsch nevertheless retain an active relationship with history. Working outside the mainstream of cultural respectability, these forms offer opportunities for both representing and embracing "undesirable pasts and alterities" (5). An examination of camp and kitsch provides a fascinating entry point for a discussion of the musical score. As Flinn so importantly points out, camp and kitsch are usually thought of as " visual or verbal" phenomena (23). Flinn's exploration of the ways in which music can be heard as camp or kitsch forces us to rethink how the musical score might operate in terms of cultural, social, and political issues. In Werner Schroeter's *Bomber Pilot* for instance, fragments from Elvis, Wagnerian opera, American pop music, and Johann Strauss waltzes are rendered in such kitschy excess that they "no longer 'work' except as shimmery acoustic relics" (250). Drained of their meanings, they cannot cue us to a conventional emotional response, and we are forced to consider these "relics" from the past as they operate for us today.

The New German Cinema is a major achievement. It should be of great interest not only to scholars and students in the film music community (for whom it should be required reading), but also to specialists in New German Cinema, as well as readers seeking challenging, stimulating, and theoretically rigorous work on film.

KATHRYN KALINAK, Professor of English and Film Studies at Rhode Island College, is the author of *Settling the Score: Music and the Classical Hollywood Film,* as well as numerous articles on film music. She is at work on a book entitled *How the West Was Sung,* on the music of John Ford's Westerns.

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Playing the Race Card has already become—and I believe will continue to be seen in following decades as—a classic. One of Linda Williams' signal achievements in past years has been to demonstrate the centrality of much-maligned forms such as pornography and horror. In this book she makes the case, as it has never quite been made before, for the "dominance" in American popular culture of the also maligned "moving picture melodrama." Melodrama moved from obscurity to a more prominent place in film studies after the publication of two significant collections and the 1992 international conference on melodrama held in London.[1] With this remarkable book, Williams more fully articulates the approach that she and others have pioneered. *Playing the Race Card,* however, will most likely be remembered not for its comprehensive study of the American mode of melodrama but for its companion thesis on race, powerfully thematized here as "melodramas of black and white." Williams, however, does not allow the serious reader to take the one without the other, and insists that the raced paradigm is constitutive of and inextricable from American melodrama—even when the mode structures popular narratives that do not appear to represent "black and white" dynamics at all.

And what she means by this is not limited to the infamous Manichean worldview long held to define melodrama. Williams argues that for popular genres, all narrative action coupled with intense feeling is underwritten by the history of American race relations beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Significant for film theory is the alternative offered here to sexual difference as a reigning paradigm. Instead, the

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"melodramatics of race" paradigm can be seen as having produced the "moral legibility" of the new medium of cinema, beginning with D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915).

This dense and rewarding study begins with Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and holds its focus on a "melodramatics of race" that encompasses *Way Down East* (1920), *The Jazz Singer* (1927), *Show Boat* (1936), *Gone With the Wind* (1939), and the TV serial "Roots" (1977), as well as the Alex Haley novel upon which the serial was based. *Playing the Race Card* concludes with an analysis of the Rodney King videotape (1991) and its relation to the race riots that followed the verdict in the court case *California v. Powell* (1992), and of Court TV's airing of the O.J. Simpson trials (1994). And it is from prosecutor Christopher Darden's metaphor of the "race card" (the move he so vehemently opposed) that Williams draws her title. The function of the title is to argue, against Darden, that there is no such thing as race-blind American culture. Williams' response to the assumption of race neutrality in this book is to attempt to dispel all myths of race neutrality, to show how often the "race card" is "in play."

It is likely that *Playing the Race Card* has two separate readerships—the wider audience drawn to what is probably the most deeply probing analysis of Court TV's coverage of the Simpson trial yet produced by an American critic, and the academic audience of film and television scholars as well as American Studies scholars. Cinema scholars will find the discussions of classical narrative realism as opposed to melodrama, "pathos and action," "moral legibility," and "moving pictures" to be seminal. They may note, as I did, that the difficult theoretical questions having to do with film form are concentrated in the portion of the book devoted to theatrical melodrama and silent film. This density gives way to a more thematic analysis in the later chapters, no doubt a function of the uneven development of the field of film and television within what could be called the "cinema century." Thus my concentration here on what I consider to be the most important contributions of the book to the field, beginning with the concept of the "moving picture melodrama," so close to our understanding of the early spectator's fascination with things "moving."

What we may think of as two senses of the verb "move" are very close together etymologically. Williams demonstrates this by taking apart the characteristic devices of "moving picture melodrama." For instance, cross-cutting in her extended analysis relies on a complex temporality tied to a requisite space of innocence of melodrama. In this form, it would seem, it is both "too late" (time is lost) and "never too late" (something may yet reverse events). In melodrama, the spectator, as Williams explains it, yearns to return to an earlier time—the time "before it is too late." Pictures that are moving in turn "move us"; images set in motion stir the emotions. It should be noted that approaches to classical narrative realism here never exactly developed a companion theory of emotional response. Most powerful has been the way continuity devices produce the illusion of a continuous world. Even voyeurism, understood as a classical narrative device, is more related to an abstract, gendered subject position than to emotions. Williams holds that one of the virtues of the "cinema of attractions" paradigm as an alternative or supplement to classical narrative is that it could be understood as "moving spectators," opening up the territory of bodily response as well as the possibility of "affect." But here is where the reader is still left with questions about the problem of what might be called "affect as effect." While Williams deftly avoids the traps of empiricism with concepts such as "appeals to the senses," and demonstrates a much more complex imbrication based on the connection between temporality and emotion, we are left with nagging questions about the production of emotions (plural), especially since the premise of the book is that melodrama works by an exquisite calibration of "pathos and action."[2]

Perhaps the most difficult hurdle Williams faces is the question of the relation between classical narrative realism and melodrama, especially since she wants to argue that melodrama as a set of devices is more central in American film history. She attempts to achieve this by separating out the classical-realism-as-form question from the question of the realism that melodrama requires in order to work, in order to produce "melodramatics." The basic argument here is that although melodrama is *not* classical narrative realism, it should not be understood as being merely *in excess of* classical realism either. By classicism, Williams means the understanding of cinema as unified and economical in the most Aristotelian of senses, characterized by narrative rules of cause and effect, closure, and tightly "motivated" events. It is not so much an either-or choice as it is a question of "dominance," Williams argues. But it may not be necessary to establish "dominance" in order to question classicism, however, for it can easily be shown that inconsistent anti-realist, non-continuity devices are accommodated by classical narrative realism, only one example of which may be cross-cutting. What still needs to be developed (and I am eager to be convinced) is how much trouble (a full inventory of devices) melodrama stirs up, trouble that classicism can't resolve, without necessarily calling this trouble "excess." One thinks here of Laura Mulvey's reference to the dust cloud of "over-determined irreconcilables" that the Sirkian story raises and which do not neatly settle as the result of classical narrative closure.[3]

Playing the Race Card's grip on melodrama is much tighter than its grip on realism, a condition of the many realisms with which any political analysis of culture must contend. I follow Williams as she argues, against theater history's contention, that realism "triumphed" over melodrama. Trickier is the argument that melodrama requires realism but subordinates it. While realism is concerned with careful motivation and plausibility, melodrama may need to abandon the former but not the latter.

From Peter Brooks, Williams borrows but enlarges the concept of "moral legibility," most significantly served by spectacular scenarios and "displays of pathos and action" at the level of narrative as well as spectacle (25). Here, Williams argues that spectacle is not the antithesis of narrative, but rather that narrative cause and effect are at the service of "spectacles of pathos and action." In order to see this, we would need to understand, according to Williams' examples, Stella Dallas as elbowing her way through the crowd to weep

over her daughter's wedding from behind a fence and Rambo as suffering physical and emotional indignities in addition to rescuing and avenging. What would be particularly American, with prototypes in *The Birth of a Nation* and *Way Down East,* would be the degree to which the performance of deeds correlates with the recognition of virtue. Or, the revelation of virtue *requires* action. Melodrama as form calls for swift and certain justice, amelioration of hurt, reversal of wrong. Or, form goes hand in hand with moral legibility, in contrast to moral ambiguity or uncertainty, which cannot deliver the effective "melos."

But here is where *Playing the Race Card* is so interesting from the point of view of feminist film theory. Williams clearly comes to the formulation of pathos and action from feminism. Eerily, feminist film theory's spectacle (female) versus narrative (male) can almost be perceived underneath her paradigm. But there are practically no references to feminism in the body of the text, an interesting absence given Williams' earlier reputation as a feminist film theorist. One could conclude from this that feminism is assumed. Not only did feminism "gender" positions, but it allowed for the exchange of gender positions between male and female. Thus, in *Playing the Race Card,* female characters do not have a monopoly on suffering, particularly when one considers Stowe's original, Uncle Tom, and his contemporary heir, the sympathetic giant John Coffey. Williams' final, startlingly brilliant reading of *The Green Mile* (1999) is, as they say, worth the price of the book! She adds to our repertoire of concepts the alternately gendered "victim-hero." Perhaps her move is a corrective to the assumption from earlier work on Stowe: that melodrama empowered the disempowered, women and blacks, exclusively.

If Williams is right, our sympathy for even the most masculine of action-heroes is solicited in terms of *his victimization* at the hands of his enemies. (Perhaps "victim-heroism" explains the physical setbacks that temporarily wound superheroes—Batman, Spiderman, Superman.) But note that the ramifications of any argument for male victimhood always seems to be made at the expense of female victimhood. The American culture, race, and gender paradigm is a stubborn hierarchy. If, as Williams argues, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is an early inversion of the gender and race conventions of theatrical melodrama (that Uncle Tom is a "feminized" black male and the escaping Eliza a "masculinized" black woman), it would seem that Uncle Tom must be given *white* female virtues and Eliza awarded white *male* ones. Who gets the *black female* virtues? In realigning Uncle Tom and white women (through analogous sympathy with the white women in *The Birth of a Nation*) the *Playing the Race Card* paradigm rehabilitates Harriet Beecher Stowe (once so summarily vilified by black writer James Baldwin).[4] Does the book need to? It seems that Stowe and her character Tom are essential to the paradigm that relegates the black woman to a minor role in a major equation. Yet Williams contends that at the core of American literature is the mulatta slave escaping bondage. Is she willing to go another step—to argue that the victimhood of the action hero is *hers*? That it all goes back to Eliza crossing the ice, chased by slave-catchers with bloodhounds?

The implications for American Studies are profound, perhaps more profound than they are for film and television studies. Consider in this regard the sweeping assertion that "Since the mid-nineteenth century, melodrama has been . . . the primary way in which mainstream American culture has dealt with the moral dilemma of having first enslaved and then withheld equal rights to generations of African Americans" (44). One could see this analysis as a variant of Toni Morrison's indication of the "Africanist presence" at the heart of American literature.[5] The difference is that where Morrison gives us the argument, Williams develops a methodology. What is also new is that film history and theory, developed outside literary studies because literary studies could not accommodate the popular mechanical form, are now placed back within the larger tradition from which the work of D.W. Griffith, for instance, was separated out. Finally, Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel as well as the hundreds of stage melodramas based on the novel to the four silent film versions—the Edison Company's *Uncle Toms* (sic) *Cabin or Slavery Days* (Edwin S. Porter, 1903); and the Vitagraph (1910), World Producing Corporation (1914), and Universal (1927) versions—are seen as crucial links in an approach that understands American culture in this case as thoroughly and undeniably *mass* culture.

If, as Linda Williams argues, the legacy of moving picture melodrama is the melodramatization of everything (sports, news, courtroom trials), the melodramatization of everything for the critic means that we have a methodology that brings the rigor of film and television text analysis to an increasingly amorphous cultural studies approach. We have the revitalization and modernization of the form in *Titanic* (1997), read against *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a narrative move from a space of innocence to the class stratification analogous to the slave ship. How Williams moves in American cultural history from the fictional slavery days of Uncle Tom, through *The Birth of a Nation* to the contemporary televised O.J. Simpson trial is a remarkable feat of criticism. Unforgettable is the connection between Uncle Tom's humble, Lincolnesque cabin, the cabin defended by the white patriarchy at the end of *The Birth of a Nation,* and O.J. Simpson's Rockingham house, demolished after his trial. Yet in order to help the reader negotiate the great American flip-flop in relation to race relations, Williams devises the shorthand "anti-Tom" as a way of signaling the move from Tom as suffering and aligned with the white woman to the threat to the white woman, persisting from Gus and Sylas Lynch through to O.J. Simpson—accused, in 1999, of murdering his white wife. What seems in retrospect so remarkable would be the cultural trouble that the nation would have to go to in order to commute the sympathy for Uncle Tom, these race feelings, into an antithetical set of race feelings requisite for the definition of a new nation founded on white supremacy. Williams advances an extremely bold alternative to the African-American community's negative inflection of "Uncle Tomism." But does Williams suggest that anti-Tom is more to be reviled than is white-capitulating, "effeminate" "Uncle Tomism"?

This ground-breaking book has a strange and fascinating resemblance to melodrama itself, to the apparent orderliness

of its schema. Seldom do we encounter works of criticism in the humanities that are able to weave such a tight and comprehensive thesis. What of the theoretical questions that remain unsolved? Melodrama both is and is not this tidy.

NOTES

1. For the collection based on the conference, see *Melodrama: Stage/Picture/Screen,* ed. Jacky Bratton, Jim Cook, Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1994), a book preceded by the important *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987).
2. Williams' own work on *Psycho* (1960), where she theorizes the "performance of fear" by female audiences, may have relevance. Is there a way in which audiences of both the silent and sound eras can be seen as "performing" the suffering requisite to the proper staging of virtue? See Linda Williams, "Discipline and Fun: *Psycho* and Postmodern Cinema," in *Reinventing Film Studies,* ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (London: Arnold, 2000), 351-78.
3. Laura Mulvey, "Notes on Sirk and Melodrama," in Gledhill, ed., 76.
4. James Baldwin, "Everybody's Protest Novel," in *Notes of a Native Son* (1955; reprint, New York: Beacon Press, 1984), 13-23.
5. In *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). Morrison says, "Through significant and underscored omissions, startling contradictions, heavily nuanced conflicts, through the way writers peopled their work with the signs and bodies of this presence—one can see that a real or fabricated Africanist presence was crucial to their sense of Americanness. And it shows" (9).

JANE GAINES teaches film at Duke University, where she is Professor of Literature and English.

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Reading Between Designs

By Piers D. Britton and Simon J. Barker. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003. $60.00 cloth; $24.95 paper. 251 pages.

The first line of the introduction to *Reading Between Designs* succinctly announces its subject: design for television, what the authors declare to be unexplored territory where there is no "serious, sustained examination of the role of scenic or costume design in the medium" (1). Acknowledging that a number of works on design in the cinema have been written, and naming Charles S. Tashiro and Sue Harper, Britton and Barker inform us that far from making this a comprehensive study, they will use three series—chosen for their use of anti-naturalistic design—as case studies: "The Avengers," "The Prisoner," and "Doctor Who." The introduction establishes some of the differences between film and television design and even more fundamentally, it explains exactly what is meant by design. According to the authors, this would refer to "all material objects, spaces, and costumes created or selected to appear in front of the camera . . . except the actors themselves" (2).

The approach that they take is to consider design as a vehicle for ideas, not as a process. An interesting question posed right at the start is, Why has the study of design for screen media been so thoroughly neglected until the 1990s? They suggest two possible reasons. The first is intellectual snobbery: to many, "the idea of spending intellectual energy in earnestly discussing *Ellen* or *Star Trek* . . . is inherently laughable" (8). The second proposes that "*narrative* form, not *visual* form, has taken precedence in scholarly analysis" (8). Britton and Barker rightly point out that underlying these reasons is the crucial prejudice against television on the part of critics who still make the time-honored distinction between high and low culture—and the equally traditional prejudice against all visual arts as "lacking intellectual substance" (9).

Chapter 1, "Making a Spectacle," surveys some of the basic imperatives of design for television and compares it briefly to its cinematic counterpart. In addition, the authors discuss the connections between genre and design. For example, while the set of a game show may frequently draw attention to itself and that of a news program will function just to "fill up the part of the screen unoccupied by a human body," realism must prevail in the design of sets for television series, serials, and plays (30-31). This chapter also offers an informative and cogent discussion of the relationship between design and narrative. Among the points made by Britton and Barker are first, that the two may belie each other, as there is such a lack of control over viewers' responses, emotional and otherwise, that they may actually "generate meanings that run tangentially or even contrary to the program-maker's intent" (16). Secondly, that design imagery may "generate constellations of associative thoughts" whereas the narrative must often follow a linear trajectory (19).

It is in Chapter 2, "Stylishness and the Sense of Play in Design for *The Avengers,*" that Barker and Britton offer the most tantalizing part of their discussion. This series, "a prime signifier for the Sixties," according to the authors, spanned the entire decade from 1960 to 1969. The authors focus on two particular aspects of its design: the "distinctive costume image for John Steed" and scenic design during the 1965-66 season. The series that became and remains to this day a cult favorite set a style that has come to be known as the mod/trad duality because of the contrast between Steed's old-fashioned English foppishness (bowler hat, rolled umbrella, etc.) and Mrs. Peel's iconic avant-garde leather, gender-bending body suits and boots (common now but unprecedented in their day). The inventiveness in this series extended itself to all aspects of design, especially under the direction of Harry Pottle, in whose "flexible idiom . . . generic conventions as diverse as gothic horror and drawing-room comedy could appear to be natural bedfellows" (40). Not surprisingly, all these elements add up to making "The Avengers" one of the first postmodern television series: "*The Avengers* always embraced the cliché, stereotype, and nostalgia as warmly as a bad B movie, but did so with infinite knowing" (44).

As a contrast to "The Avengers," Barker and Britton propose the short-lived BBC series "The Prisoner." Whereas the former aired for an entire decade and influenced many other series, "The Prisoner" aired a mere 17 weeks and had no artis-

of its schema. Seldom do we encounter works of criticism in the humanities that are able to weave such a tight and comprehensive thesis. What of the theoretical questions that remain unsolved? Melodrama both is and is not this tidy.

NOTES

1. For the collection based on the conference, see *Melodrama: Stage/Picture/Screen,* ed. Jacky Bratton, Jim Cook, Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1994), a book preceded by the important *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987).
2. Williams' own work on *Psycho* (1960), where she theorizes the "performance of fear" by female audiences, may have relevance. Is there a way in which audiences of both the silent and sound eras can be seen as "performing" the suffering requisite to the proper staging of virtue? See Linda Williams, "Discipline and Fun: *Psycho* and Postmodern Cinema," in *Reinventing Film Studies,* ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (London: Arnold, 2000), 351-78.
3. Laura Mulvey, "Notes on Sirk and Melodrama," in Gledhill, ed., 76.
4. James Baldwin, "Everybody's Protest Novel," in *Notes of a Native Son* (1955; reprint, New York: Beacon Press, 1984), 13-23.
5. In *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). Morrison says, "Through significant and underscored omissions, startling contradictions, heavily nuanced conflicts, through the way writers peopled their work with the signs and bodies of this presence—one can see that a real or fabricated Africanist presence was crucial to their sense of Americanness. And it shows" (9).

JANE GAINES teaches film at Duke University, where she is Professor of Literature and English.

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In Chapter 4, the authors shift their focus to the politics of design. Unlike "The Avengers" and "The Prisoner," "Doctor Who" (BBC TV, 1963-89) enjoyed a longevity that inevitably led to what the authors call a complex and unwieldy design history. Also, unlike the other two programs, which in different ways were critically acclaimed, "Doctor Who" could make no claim to intellectual respectability (132); nor was design an indispensable part of the narrative structure. According to the authors, the series "often represented a triumph of the visually expressed idea over the verbally expressed cliché" (132).

In their afterword, Britton and Barker reiterate that their book is not definitive and proceed to propose ways in which *Reading Between Designs* might serve as the foundation for future studies. They name two principal elements: the "phenomenon of the sartorially distinctive" male protagonist, and the use of visual imagery to create a selective reflection of the real world (200). In the brief analysis of three other television series that follows, they mention possible avenues of development. The disclosure of their ideas for future work leaves me puzzled; it is much more common for researchers to jealously guard such plans from their potential rivals. Nevertheless, judging by this book, which is at the same time informative, well researched, and interesting, we can only hope that the authors decide to pursue their ideas themselves.

GRACE RUSSO BULLARO is Assistant Professor at CUNY Lehman College, where she teaches interdisciplinary courses in literature, philosophy, popular culture, and cinema studies.

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Reel Baseball: Essays and Interviews on the National Pastime, Hollywood and American Culture

Edited by Stephen C. Wood and J. David Pincus. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2003. $29.95. 326 pages.

"The only church that feeds the soul day in and day out is the church of baseball" (*Bull Durham*). If baseball is the church, then *Reel Baseball: Essays and Interviews on the National Pastime, Hollywood and American Culture* is the Bible for essays on baseball and film. The game of baseball has always contained a mythic and dreamlike quality, while at the same time forming the perfect balance of democracy, aesthetics, and realism. Stephen D. Wood and J. David Pincus are the apostles who bring us this expansive collection of essays which addresses both the academic and the general reader. Since 1989, the National Baseball Hall of Fame has hosted the Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture; in 1997, McFarland decided to publish all the papers presented at this symposium, and as a result *Reel Baseball* combines baseball with film, history, American culture, Hollywood, and politics. It includes contributors from various backgrounds, such as communications, English, history, American studies, marketing, film studies, telecommunications, and public relations, but the "reel" cohesive glue that binds the contributors together is their love for the game.

Other than *Reel Baseball,* only a couple of books have been written on baseball and film and both have been within the last several years. In *Mr. Deeds Goes to Yankee Stadium: Baseball Films in the Capra Tradition* (2004), Wes Gehring examines eight Capraesque baseball films; his book, although limited, provides an original analysis of this subgenre. In another approach, Hal Erickson catalogues and details films exhaustively in the second edition of *The Baseball Filmography, 1915 Through 2001* (2002), which is still considered the definitive reference work in the baseball film genre.

Reel Baseball is organized in four sections (rather archly classified as reels). Reel 1, "Baseball in Baseball Films," contains what are called "baseball" or primary films (they include *The Natural, Bull Durham, Field of Dreams, A League of Their Own, Eight Men Out,* and *Pride of the Yankees*), which have baseball as their central theme. Reel 2 attempts to explore arguably the greatest player in baseball history and folklore: "Babe Ruth and the Silver Screen" dives into various films made about this iconic baseball player. Although the first and second reels directly deal with baseball in film, Reel 3, "Baseball in Non-Baseball Films," creatively analyzes films that use baseball in subtle ways—among them *Good Morning, Vietnam, Memphis Belle, The Great Escape,* and *Cannery Row.* However, the depth of analysis in Reel 3 compared to the number of films mentioned is not adequately balanced. The fourth and most interesting reel contains interviews with actors, directors, and baseball personalities, including Kevin Costner, James Earl Jones, James Belushi, Penny Marshall, and Vin Scully.

Although *Reel Baseball* may seem just another book on sports, editors and major contributors Wood and Pincus attempt to blend various fields—cultural ideologies of American culture within the framework of baseball, myth, folklore, and both Hollywood and baseball personalities—which have had little attention prior to the writing of this book, and in many ways they succeed in doing so. Baseball has been traditionally categorized as the great American game, synonymous with American history and culture, placed above all other sports as the archetypal myth. Indeed, the idea of myth persists in almost every essay, but is most readily seen in both Richard C. Crepeau's "Babe Ruth and the Feature Film: The Muddling of Myth" and Kurt Billmeyer's "The Myth and

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Rebirth of Shoeless Joe Jackson in *Eight Men Out* and *Field of Dreams*." The baseball hero, inasmuch as he rarely diverges from myth, can also be found throughout this collection. Most notably, but not surprisingly, Frank Ardolino catalogues the great Bambino's heroic image in "From Christ-Like Folk Hero to Bumbling Bacchus: Filmic Images of Babe Ruth, 1920-1992."

Interestingly, some of the greatest baseball films contain very little footage of baseball, focusing instead on the players' relationship with owners, management, managers, coaches, players, wives, and fans, thus emphasizing the theme of the baseball community which "has always been a central component of baseball's cultural vision" (36). In fact, the films that attracted most attention in this collection were *Bull Durham, Field of Dreams, The Natural,* and *Eight Men Out*—all of which contain very little actual baseball footage, and in effect received the most popularity in the public sphere not only as great "baseball" movies, but also as great "movies."

Baseball in film has been a constant in Hollywood for almost a century, paralleling the popularity of the actual sport. The most striking aspect of this collection is that it attempts to encapsulate the full spectrum of movies that deal with baseball in some way, not just the classic baseball movies, and in some aspects succeeds in doing so. However, with such a catalogue to cover, the ability to do more than merely mention, allude to, reference, or at most write a couple of paragraphs on these lesser-known baseball movies gives an illusion of the scope of the book's detail and analysis, which in fact only focus in depth on traditionally reviewed movies, despite the author's intent to counter this limitation. With hopes of finding an extensive analysis of *Bang the Drum Slowly* or some such cult baseball film, I found myself flipping to yet another essay dealing with the "Babe" or Roy Hobbs. Even with that said, this is the first collection of its kind, and it deserves praise for its effort in advancing an otherwise limited field. It will likely spawn similar collections in the future. In fact, it makes one realize how immensely popular and prevalent baseball in film has been throughout cinematic history.

DEREK GLADWIN has written on literature and the environment, film, and the healing and martial arts.

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Ruth Harriet Louise and Hollywood Glamour Photography

By Robert Dance and Bruce Robertson. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002. $65.00 cloth; $35.00 paper. 285 pages.

Still photographers were an integral part of the Hollywood studio system workforce for 40 years, producing, by some estimates, millions of photos each year during that period (photographers at the major studios averaged 250-300 negatives per day). During the heyday of the studio era, most of these photographers specialized in creating one of three kinds of photographs: stills on the film set (which were shot after the last take of important scenes or shots of a film); portraits (usually shot in the photographer's own "gallery" on the lot); and publicity shots (often taken off-site at the star's home or other locations). Although some stills were taken for preproduction decisions (costume tests or location scouting, for instance) or for record-keeping (for continuity within scenes and shots), the primary reason the studios demanded such prodigious output from the photographers they kept on staff or sometimes employed freelance was for the crucial role photos played in promotion and publicity of films and stars.

The history of still photography practices in the studio system has received serious attention in the last couple of decades, most notably in the work of historian-collectors Joel Finler and John Kobal, and in catalogs for museum exhibitions of Hollywood portrait photography. Robert Dance and Bruce Robertson, in *Ruth Harriet Louise and Hollywood Glamour Photography,* have written perhaps the most detailed history of how portrait photography was integral to the working practices, business philosophy, and "style" of one studio (MGM) in a very specific historical moment (the mid to late 1920s). They relate this historical narrative through the biography and career of and the (beautifully reproduced) photos by Ruth Harriet Louise, the only woman photographer to have her own portrait studio at one of the major film companies.

A rabbi's daughter, Louise was born Ruth Goldstein in 1903. Nothing in her family background suggested an unusual investment in visual culture or the entertainment industry (although she and brother Mark participated in college musical revues), yet she was not the only one in the family that ended up employed by the film industry: her brother became a top film director (as Mark Sandrich), and silent film star Carmel Myers, whose most famous role was in the 1926 version of *Ben-Hur,* was a first cousin. In fact, what little evidence is extant leads Dance and Robertson to conclude it was Myers who got Louise, who had her own small photography studio in New Brunswick, New Jersey, the position at MGM in 1925. While the authors establish that family connections eased her entrée into the studio, they argue that what made her successful there was in part a philosophy of portrait work she first displayed in her own studio photographing the members of her temple community. They quote a short essay she authored in 1922 in which she not only expresses certain romantic notions about photographs having "souls," but also enunciates that photographs must express the subject's "personality."

Dance and Robertson quite rightly emphasize the importance of "personality" to film stardom, a phenomenon in which studio contrivance and audience desire exist in a dynamic tension over who should be designated "star." They point to the oft-noted paradox of stardom—a star should be a recognizable type, yet be unique—to argue that Louise had an ability in her photo work to bring out, and/or shape, a unique personality for performers who were being cast and otherwise promoted as particular, familiar types. Where the authors are most successful in this regard is in the chapters on Louise's portraits of individual stars—one which details

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Dance and Robertson quite rightly emphasize the importance of "personality" to film stardom, a phenomenon in which studio contrivance and audience desire exist in a dynamic tension over who should be designated "star." They point to the oft-noted paradox of stardom—a star should be a recognizable type, yet be unique—to argue that Louise had an ability in her photo work to bring out, and/or shape, a unique personality for performers who were being cast and otherwise promoted as particular, familiar types. Where the authors are most successful in this regard is in the chapters on Louise's portraits of individual stars—one which details

Louise's work with Joan Crawford, Marion Davies, and Norma Shearer; another which details her work with male stars (sometimes overlooked in discussions of glamour photography) Ramon Novarro, John Gilbert, William Haines, and Johnny Mack Brown; one on photographing such "actor-stars" as Lillian Gish, Lon Chaney, Buster Keaton, and Marie Dressler; and one on her portraits of Greta Garbo. The chapters which compare and contrast the work Louise did with several stars are valuable not merely because they elucidate the artistry of the photographer; they are also fascinating case studies of how one studio, through casting and promotion (including photography), developed new talent, sustained or changed the perception of performers who came to it already established as stars, and revealed its incompatibility with certain types of talent (such as Gish).

However, it is the chapter on Louise's portraits of Garbo that is perhaps the most revealing of Louise's special gift and the importance of the photo to a subject's ascendance to stardom. As with Crawford, Louise was the photographer most significant to the initial visualizing of this young actress's star potential. But Garbo had been the subject of a few photos by important photographers before arriving at the studio in Los Angeles. The authors therefore have points of comparison to use in their argument that it was Louise's portraits of Garbo—which emphasized her sensuality, playfulness, and the important combination of both passion and reserve—that most shaped the persona that would define the star in the silent era. Also, since Garbo refused to do much of the typical publicity that someone like Crawford enthusiastically participated in (such as stills of her at home, modeling clothes, etc.), the portraits took on even greater weight in the development of Garbo's persona than they did in Crawford's case. This was all the more true since even the portraits were rare (compared to the quantity of portraits of other stars). Garbo's persona was alluring because it was so elusive, and what the authors call the "trickle" of publicity about her accentuated this quality almost as much as the content of any piece of promotion or publicity.

It is in the chapters on these particular stars that the book contributes the most significant primary research and textual analyses. However, the preceding chapters on the organization of publicity and promotion at the studio and the marketing to the female fan are also astute and well researched, and although it is familiar material to most film historians, the presence of it here works as a welcome refresher in studio system history and as glue for the more specific and narrowly focused case studies that follow. Taken together, the chapters on the publicity and promotion practices at MGM and those on the star subjects of the publicity and promotion give the reader a strong sense of how this studio operated from 1925-29.

Sometimes the authors are less convincing, for instance, when they are inconsistent about how they evaluate the "truth value" of material appearing in fan magazines. Sometimes they appropriately question the authorship of material in such publications (asking whether designer Adrian really wrote the column attributed to him by *Screenland*); at other times they seem to take material at face value (when they use quotes from Garbo from fan magazines). They also on occasion use evidence from the magazines to construct the defining characteristics of the female fan, rather than reminding the reader that these are discourses about female fandom, even when the words seem to come from a fan herself. The failure to contextualize such discourses adequately and the use of terms like "objectify" or "objectification" in a casual, taken-for-granted manner, flaw an otherwise perceptive and sensitive attention to gender and sexual politics. For example, in discussing the differences between Louise's work and that of George Hurrell—Louise's successor as portrait photographer at MGM—the authors suggest Louise never objectified her subjects, whereas Hurrell did. The authors don't explicitly define what they mean by objectification, but the point is debatable anyway. While Hurrell's photos were certainly flashier, more self-conscious, and sometimes more abstract than Louise's, they were not necessarily more objectifying, if by this we mean a sexual objectification of the female body meant only for the enjoyment of the "male gaze." Hurrell's photos of Jean Harlow, a star who came to MGM after Louise left, are a good case in point—Harlow is often lit to accentuate what constituted her as a sexy "bombshell," yet she not only doesn't seem uncomfortable, she positively radiates warmth and self-enjoyment in these portraits. It may not have been different from Louise's way of capturing "personality," but Hurrell was certainly capturing something of Harlow that "objectification" would not inadequately describe.

Maybe Hurrell needs to be taken down a notch, as he not only replaced Louise (whose contract was not renewed by MGM after Hurrell was seen as the preferred photographer for some stars, such as Novarro and Shearer) in late 1929, he also apparently later misremembered that there was a cause-and-effect relationship between her leaving and his coming to MGM, a move that apparently wasn't regretted by Louise's senior male colleague Clarence Sinclair Bull. Dance and Robertson quote Hurrell in his misrememberment a few pages before the end of their book, a few pages before they state simply that Louise died in 1940 of complications from childbirth, a fact which might shock readers who don't usually pair the concept of the twentieth-century professional woman with the reality of women dying from childbirth. Unlike the authors of this book, Hurrell doesn't seem to have realized the implications of her loss to the studio and to the history of portrait photography. Dance and Robertson do provide necessary evidence for the restoration of Louise to a prominent place in the history of still photo portraiture, and they do so eloquently, in a very handsomely designed book.

MARY DESJARDINS teaches Film and Television Studies at Dartmouth College. She has contributed essays to many journals and anthologies; her book, *Recycled Stars: Female Stardom in the Age of Television and Video,* is forthcoming from Duke University Press.

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